A PERFORMANCE GUIDE TO MARCEL DUPRÉ'S WORKS FOR ORGAN AND PIANO

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Table of Contents

List of Examples

List of Figures

List of Appendices

Chapter 1: Introduction

Scope of the project

The final project will consist of a 60-minute lecture-recital and this document on Marcel Dupré's (1886–1971) compositions for organ and piano. Dupré wrote three works for this combination of instruments: *Ballade*, Op. 30 (1932),[1] *Variations on Two Themes*, Op. 35 (1938 and 1956),[2] and *Sinfonia*, Op. 42 (1947).[3] The lecture-recital will include a 30-minute lecture on the background of the pieces and the issues related to performance and analysis. The remainder of the recital will be a complete performance of all three pieces, which total 30 minutes. This document will take the form of a performance guide discussing both the performance challenges and the structural elements to help performers in interpretation.

The manuscripts of the three works can be found in the *Manuscrits Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris, France. The H.W. Gray Company published the *Ballade* and *Variations on Two Themes.* The *Sinfonia* exists in editions by H.W. Gray Co. and Crescendo Music Publications.

Purpose of the study

As a performer, I was interested in the challenges of getting these two vastly different keyboard instruments to work as a musical ensemble. The combination of organ and piano proves to be a difficult one for composers and performers. Although both instruments have keyboards to produce musical tone, the way each instrument creates sound is entirely different. While the organ produces sound through pressurized air blowing into a pipe, the piano produces

[1] Marcel Dupré, *Ballade for Piano and Organ Op. 30* (New York: H.W. Gray, 1933).
[2] Marcel Dupré, *Variations on Two Themes for Piano and Organ, Op. 35* (New York: H.W. Gray, 1956).
[3] Marcel Dupré, *Sinfonia for Piano and Organ, Op. 42* (New York: H.W. Gray, 1947).

sound by a hammer striking a string that is under tension. Essentially, the organ is a wind instrument that sustains sound when the organist depresses a key while the piano is a percussive instrument with a natural decay in the tone even after the pianist has depressed a key. This difference in tone production creates ensemble issues for the performers. The composer must grapple with the challenge of getting these two opposing instruments to work together.

One of the notable contributors to this repertoire includes French composer and organist Marcel Dupré (1886–1971). The pieces are *Ballade, Op. 30* (1932), *Variations on Two Themes, Op. 35* (1938), and *Sinfonia, Op. 42* (1947). Dupré dedicated *Ballade* and *Sinfonia* to his daughter, Marguerite Dupré, who was a concert pianist.[4] Dupré wrote these pieces during the earlier part of his career while experimenting with various instrumental combinations.[5] These pieces represent Dupré's approach to addressing the issue of combining these two instruments. These compositions make the piano and organ combination an agreeable one while also highlighting each instrument's distinctive qualities.

Technical demands constitute yet another challenge for the performers. Known for his virtuosic technique and memory, Dupré made a career as one of the most prominent concert organists of the twentieth century. Marguerite Dupré was a brilliant concert pianist in her own right. Two of the three pieces, *Ballade* and *Variations on Two Themes,* have a more difficult piano part most likely to feature Marguerite's technical and musical skills. In contrast, *Sinfonia* treats both organ and piano equally. Both father and daughter performed these pieces during Dupré's concert tours to America.[6]

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[4] Samuel S. Hill, Jr., "An English Translation of Father R. Delestre's *L'ouevre de Marcel Dupré*" (DM diss., Northwestern University, 1976), 98.

[5] Other organ plus combinations includes *Poème Héroïque*, for organ, brass, and percussion, Op. 33, *Symphonie en G mineur*, Op. 25 for organ and orchestra, and the organ and orchestra arrangement of *Cortege et Litanie*, Op. 19.

[6] John Mason Pagett, "The Music of Marcel Dupré" (S.M.D. diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1975), p. 49.

While the virtuosic element in all three pieces can make them effective and attractive for concert programming, each of the works needs a coherent analysis of the structural elements, which can lead to a musically intelligent and compelling performance. Several issues arise when analyzing the musical components. At times, Dupré's variation of the thematic material can make the main themes challenging to recall. Dupré's compositional output stems from the late Romantic tradition.[7] Thus, analyzing and understanding these works requires methodologies that go beyond tonal models of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Additionally, Dupré's gifts as an improviser had a direct influence on his compositional style. Analysis of Dupré's music shows that he uses short themes, which would have been suitable for an improviser.[8] As a performer, I will demonstrate how analytical techniques can help clarify these structural issues and how knowledge of these components helps create an intelligent and musical performance. I will provide discussions and graphs to help performers understand the techniques used by theorists in analyzing twentieth-century music. I will analyze these works, including themes, harmonic progression, and overall formal structure. John Mason Pagett's analysis provides a solid foundation for the study. My analysis will expand his work by discussing Dupré's music in a pitch-centric context as defined by Joseph Straus.[9]

Organs and registration

Deciphering the character and style of the organs Dupré played will help organists understand the indicated registrations and help them adapt these pieces to various organs. The

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[7] François Sabatier, "Dupré, Marcel," Grove Music Online, last modified January 31, 2002, accessed January 8, 2019. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000008363.

[8] Michael Murray, *Marcel Dupré, the Work of a Master Organist* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985), 105.

[9] Joseph N. Straus, *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2005), 131.

premieres of these pieces suggest that performance would be possible in multiple venues, including churches, concert halls, and even a private home, as was the case when the composer performed the pieces at his residence in Meudon.[10] Dupré's lineage stems from the French Symphonic Organ tradition, exemplified by the organs of Aristide Cavaillé-Coll (1811–1899). These instruments were capable of a wide dynamic range and expressivity because of their multiple wind pressures, effective swell boxes, and the Barker lever, which allowed larger masses of sound to extend the dynamic range while maintaining the same basic timbre and stops imitative of the orchestra. These innovations mirrored nineteenth-century trends including the increasing size and the desire for a wider range of dynamics. It was Cavaillé-Coll's instruments that inspired an extensive line of French composers from César Franck to Dupré. Understanding this background places Dupré's works and style as a continuation of the French Symphonic Organ Tradition.

However, Dupré also admired the innovations made in organ building, especially from America.[11] Dupré's appreciation for these organs indicates that he preferred organs with a quick and responsive action, which becomes apparent in the passages with fast passagework. Also, he praised the various newly invented registrational devices that could quickly change stops on the organ, including pistons, toe studs, crescendo pedals, and several reversibles.[12] Influenced by the

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[10] "Liste Des Concerts Des Organistes Français À Paris Établie Alain Cartayrade," Accessed June 19, 2017. https://www.france-orgue.fr/disque/index.php?zpg=dsq.cnh.par&idx=22. The premiere of the *Ballade* took place in the Théâtre Pigalle on October 15, 1932 for the inauguration of a new Cavaillé-Coll organ.

John Mason Pagett, "The Music of Marcel Dupré," 455. The premiere of the *Variations on Two Themes* took place at Yale University on October 18, 1939.

Pagett, The Music of Marcel Dupré," 462. The premiere of the *Sinfonia* took place at Eaton Auditorium in Toronto, Canada. The organ was a large 90-stop instrument built by Casavant Frères. For more information on the organ, see: https://pipeorgandatabase.org/OrganDetails.php?OrganID=53843

[11] Marcel Dupré, *Recollections* (Melville, N.Y. : Belwin-Mills Pub. Corp., 1975), 143; Pagett, 42; Pagett, 48; Pagett, 57.

[12] An example of this can also be seen in the renovations he made on his home organ from Alexandre Guilmant. See Rollin Smith's *Pipe Organs of the Rich and Famous*, 94–95.

instruments he performed on during his many tours in America, his organ works began to incorporate the quick changes in registration made possible by these technological developments.[13]

Dupré integrated English and American technology into the organ for his home in Meudon in 1925, [14] which he acquired from Alexandre Guilmant (1837–1911). Mutin[15]/Cavaillé-Coll initially built the instrument. Starting in 1933, he made significant modifications, which included switching the organ to electro-pneumatic action, adding a Solo division to make four manuals, extending the manual compass, adding several new stops, and adding registrational aids. [16] These registrational aids made expressive and orchestral effects possible, including a crescendo pedal, manual and toe pistons, several toggle switches, reversibles, tabs to make Sostenutos possible, and a Pedal Divide.[17] Dupré's use of registrational aids and orchestral stops indicates that he conceived of these works for American and English organs.

Concerning the registrations, Dupré marks the specific colors of solo stops (e.g., *Clarinette*, *Hautbois*, *Voix Céleste*, or *Fonds*) to employ while also leaving out the specific manual indications in *Ballade* and *Two Themes and Variations*. This gives the organist the freedom to work on instruments with different stop layouts. As Robert Delestre, Choirmaster of the Cathedral in Rouen, and a biographer of Dupré states in his comments about the *Ballade,* following the indications exactly will result in an effective transcription for orchestra.[18]

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[13] Graham Steed, *The Organ Works of Marcel Dupré* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 1999), 28.

[14] See the Appendix for the full specification.

[15] Charles Mutin (1861–1931) was a French organ builder and proponent of the Cavaillé-Coll style. He acquired the Cavaillé-Coll firm in 1898 and built several hundred instruments until 1924.
Kurt Lueders, "Mutin, Charles," *Grove Music Online,* 2001, Accessed 12 Jan. 2021, https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000040974.

[16] Smith, *Pipe Organs of the Rich and Famous*, 95.

[17] A pedal divide is a system that allows the organist to split the pedal division at midpoint, which allows for a bass registration to be played with the left foot and a "solo" registration played with the right foot.

[18] Hill, 98.

However, the organ and orchestra create sound in vastly distinct ways. First, the organ constantly keeps the same sound as long as a key is depressed. On the other hand, the orchestra can change volume and timbre while sustaining a note. Dupré's teachers, Guilmant and Widor,[19] understood the concept that the organ can stand on its own and not imitate an orchestra.[20] Therefore, adaptions have to be made when transcribing the organ to the orchestra and vice versa.

Finally, a literal reading of the registrations does not always guarantee a successful result in a performance with organ and piano. Adapting the registration becomes necessary to perform these pieces on a variety of organs. Performers also need to address the balance between organ and piano, which depends on how the instrument is built and voiced.

[19] Laukvik, *Historical Performance Practice in Organ Playing,* 22.

[20] Alexandre Guilmant, "Organ Music and Organ Playing" preface to *Première Sonate, Op. 42* (Boston, MA: Wayne Leupold Editions, Inc., 1990), xxvii.

Charles Marie Widor, "Widor's Avant-Propos" preface to *Symphonie I* (Madison, WI: A-R Editions 1990), xxxii. Although Widor states that the organ by Cavaillé-Coll was symphonic, he takes care to distinguish the differences between the organ and the orchestra.

Chapter 2: Methodology

The methods below will combine knowledge of performance practice, analysis, and my own experience performing these pieces.

Performance practice

Understanding the performance practice of any composition helps the performer in the interpretive process. Dupré's compositional output is a continuation of the French symphonic organ tradition of the nineteenth century that started with Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens.[1] I will relate the performance practice of touch/articulation and registration of the French symphonic organ tradition to Dupré's works.

Touch/Articulation

The principal touch of the French symphonic organ tradition was legato. Thus, unless otherwise indicated with articulation marks or slurs in the score, Dupré's works require a pervasive legato as the primary touch. Additionally, Dupré taught and played repeated notes with a mathematical subdivision of the beat. Performers should decide if following Dupré's method of shortening repeated notes according to the subdivision will work for clarity and musicality.[2] Regarding the practice of handling two parts played that meet on the same note to produce a "common tone,"[3] Dupré believed that one note should be exchanged precisely for the next so that they do not run together and produce what he called "*legato pâteux*" ("paste-like legato").[4] That

[1] Marcel Dupré, *Méthode d'orgue, en deux parties* (Paris : A. Leduc, 1927), 78.
[2] George Ritchie and George B. Stauffer, *Organ Technique: Modern and Early* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 44.
[3] Ritchie and Stauffer, *Organ Technique*, 49.
[4] Laukvik, *Historical Performance Practice in Organ Playing,* 58.

is to say, repeat the common tone but keep the articulation between the repeated note as close as possible.

Registration

Understanding the instruments and the registrational practices with a given composer, composition, region, and historical period will help performers create the ideal timbres necessary for any piece. Dupré's own documented thoughts on registration and the alterations and additions made to Alexandre Guilmant's organ in his home in Meudon demonstrate that he preferred the modern advancements of organs, including electro-pneumatic action and registrational devices (pistons, toe studs, crescendo pedal) to create new effects. The need for a responsive action (mechanical or electro-pneumatic) is essential, especially in Variation Four of *Variations on Two Themes*, where the piano and organ play in parallel thirty-second notes.

Regarding registration, understanding the performance practice and timbres of the French symphonic instruments of Cavaillé-Coll will help the performer adapt these French registrations to American instruments. Dupré had to adapt the registrations himself when performed on American instruments during his concert tours. Several of the instruments that he encountered represent the American Orchestral style. Moreover, these adjustments might differ from the modifications that performers would need to make today. I will also use my experience of performing these pieces during my doctoral coursework on three vastly different organs: the mechanical action organ in Auer Hall built by C.B. Fisk and the electro-pneumatic organ in MA 407, a 1974 mechanical action organ built by Rudolph von Beckerath, and a renovated Moller from 1928. Each of these instruments poses different challenges for registration, acoustics, and location of the instruments.

Structure and form

Related to the performance of composition is an understanding of the structural elements of a piece by studying the composer's musical language. The three pieces are the middle period works from Op. 32 to Op. 54. During this period, Dupré's style moves from the tonal language of the nineteenth century to the chromaticism of the 20th century. Additionally, his textures become increasingly thinner, reflecting the compositional trend towards sparse textures of the Neo-Classical style. We can also see that Dupré employs Classical forms such as sonata-allegro and variation form, even in multi-sectional pieces that do not conform to an overall Classical design.

To aid in the analysis, I will provide excerpts, reductions, and graphs to supplement the discussion of the structure, motivic development, and post-tonal harmonic language in Dupré's music. As mentioned in the Introduction, Dupré's music requires an analysis that goes beyond theoretical methods designed for the music of the Common Practice Period. Although his works follow the tonal models of the nineteenth century, they also incorporate the increasing chromaticism of twentieth-century music without becoming atonal. Therefore, I will refer to the "pitch-centric" techniques from Straus's *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*.[5] By understanding performance practice, articulation, registration, and form, the performers can embark on the process of learning these pieces.

[5] Joseph N. Straus, *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*, 131. Music that is pitch-centric refers to the idea that the music is organized around a pitch center but without the need to follow the harmonic progressions and prescribed voice-leading tendencies found in tonal music.

Chapter 3: *Ballade*, Op. 30

Marcel Dupré wrote *Ballade*, his first organ and piano composition, in 1932 and dedicated this work to Marguerite Dupré. According to Delestre, the two premiered the piece on October 15, 1932, at the Theatre Pigalle even though Dupré wrote the piece for her American debut,[1] which took place on November 26, 1934, in Waterbury, Connecticut.[2] Stylistically, the *Ballade* has a tonal harmonic language while also exploring the chromatic language of the twentieth century, which is consistent with pieces surrounding *Ballade*, including the *Sept Pièces*, Op. 27, and *Le chemin de la Croix*, Op. 29, and the *Trois élévations*, Op. 32. Dupré places the virtuosic figuration mostly in the piano part to display Marguerite's abilities while the organ often contains the primary thematic material.[3] This chapter will first discuss the structural issues, then the performance issues, and finally registration.

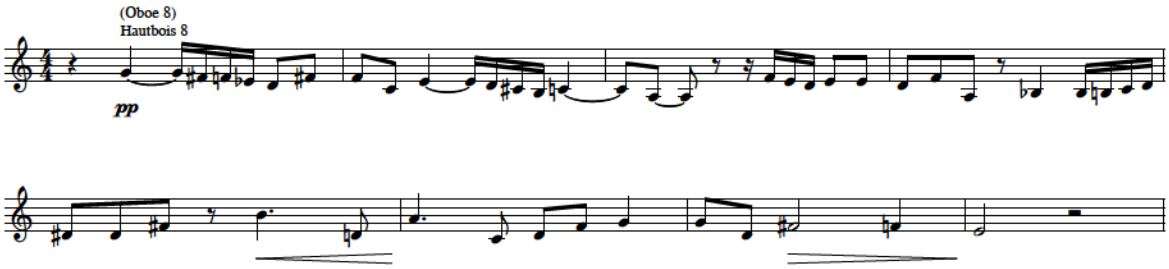
3.1 Structural Analysis

Four sections alternate between slow and fast tempi marked by the tempos *Cantabile* and *Animato*. Within this structure, there are four main themes used throughout the work. Theme A opens the work plaintively on the Oboe organ stop. Its descending half-steps combined with an overall descending contour characterize this melody. The second half of this melody expands to more extensive and more emphatic intervals, yet the melody still retains its descending contour.

[1] Samuel S. Hill, Jr., "An English Translation of Father R. Delestre's *L'ouevre De Marcel Dupré*" (DM diss., Northwestern University, 1976), 98.

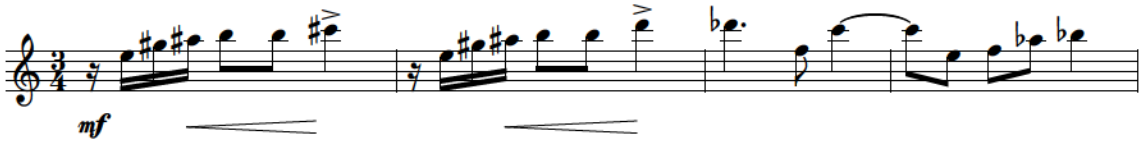
[2] Rollin Smith, "The Organ and Choral Works of Marcel Dupré: an Annotated Listing" (TAO, May 1986), 66.

[3] This approach is similar to what Olivier Messiaen would later take in the *Visions de l'Amen* (1943)—a seven-movement work written for two pianos, which was to be performed with his student Yvonne Loriod. The Piano I part contains the virtuosic material played by Loriod; the Piano II part—played by Messiaen—contains the important thematic material for this 40-minute work.



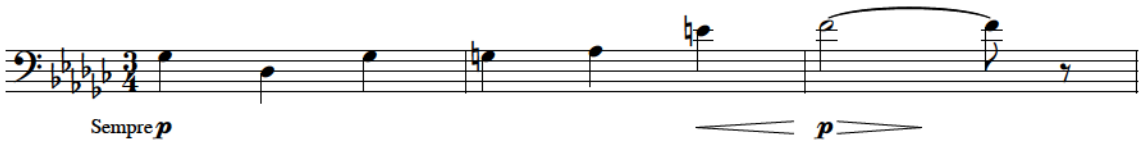
Example 3.1. ***Ballade,*** **Theme A, mm. 2–9.**

While the organ presents Theme A, the piano introduces Theme B. As a contrast to Theme A, Theme B ascends steadily upward. However, one could interpret these two melodies as one theme with their shared likenesses. First, the three anacrusis sixteenths (m. 15, b. 1) mirror the sixteenths of Theme A (m. 2, b. 3) inverted. Additionally, the larger intervals in the second half of Theme A return in Theme B (mm. 17–18). As with much of Dupré's piano writing, the texture is thick with full chords in the right hand and octaves and fifths in the bass—the left-hand often creating a sound similar to a resultant stop on the organ.



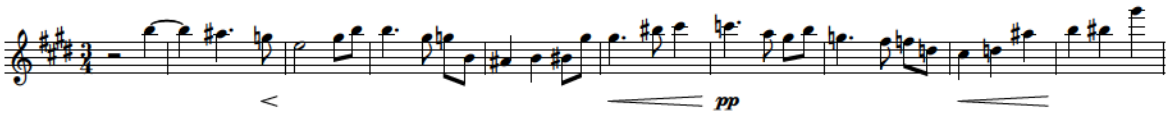
Example 3.2. ***Ballade,*** **Theme B, mm. 15–18.**

An extended transition recurs throughout the work. Dupré introduces this sequential theme using the imitative reeds (*Clarinette, Hautbois*, and *Cor*) and the swell boxes to create an orchestral dialogue.



Example 3.3. *Ballade*, Transition theme, mm. 28–30.

Theme C occurs at the end of the first section (mm. 42ff) by the organ. Its distinguishing characteristics emphasize the second beat seen in the dotted quarter note; the melody has a descending shape followed by an ascending shape. The melody descends in the middle of the phrase, starting from G♯5 to G5 to B4 before returning to G♯5. The theme's end bears some resemblance to the transition theme above with its ascending half-step followed by a leap.



Example 3.4. *Ballade,* Theme C, mm. 43–52.

The four sections of alternating slow-fast-slow-fast tempi and their respective themes are shown in the figure below.

<u>Section 1: Cantabile (mm. 1–66)</u>

- m.1: Introduction by piano
- mm.2–9: Theme A in organ
- mm. 9–15: further development of Theme A
- mm. 15–22: Theme B in organ
- mm. 23–27: further development of Theme B
- mm. 28–41: Transition with own theme, which forms a sequence
- mm. 42–52: Theme C introduced in organ
- mm. 53–66: Development of Theme C

<u>Section 2: Animato (mm. 67–84)</u>

- mm. 67–72: Introduction with modified Theme A in piano
- mm. 73–79: Modified Theme A in organ
- mm. 80–84: Theme B in piano

Section 3: Cantabile (mm. 85–127)

- mm. 85–94: Cantabile returns with Theme C in piano
- mm. 95–101: Modified Theme C in piano
- mm. 102–111: Reworking of material from mm. 53ff
- mm. 112–119: Harmonic seventh chord sequence, the motivic basis on earlier themes is speculative[4]
- mm. 120–127: transition into the last section

Section 4: Animato (mm. 128–190)

- mm. 128–134: Introduction piano introduces new toccata pattern
- mm. 135–151: Development Theme A in organ
- mm. 152–169: Theme A in canon in organ
- mm. 170–189: Theme A in canon between organ and piano
- mm. 190–204: Cantabile returns
    - mm. 190–198: Theme A in canon in organ with Theme B in piano
    - mm. 199–204: Canon continues with the addition of Sequence theme (mm. 28–41)
- mm. 205–290: Animato returns (mm. 128–290)
    - mm. 205–225: further development of Theme A
    - mm. 226–239: piano and organ develop the toccata pattern
    - mm. 240–251: toccata build-up continues, motivic material like mm. 120ff transition
    - mm. 252–278: Theme B in organ in the final modified form
    - mm. 279–290: Codetta

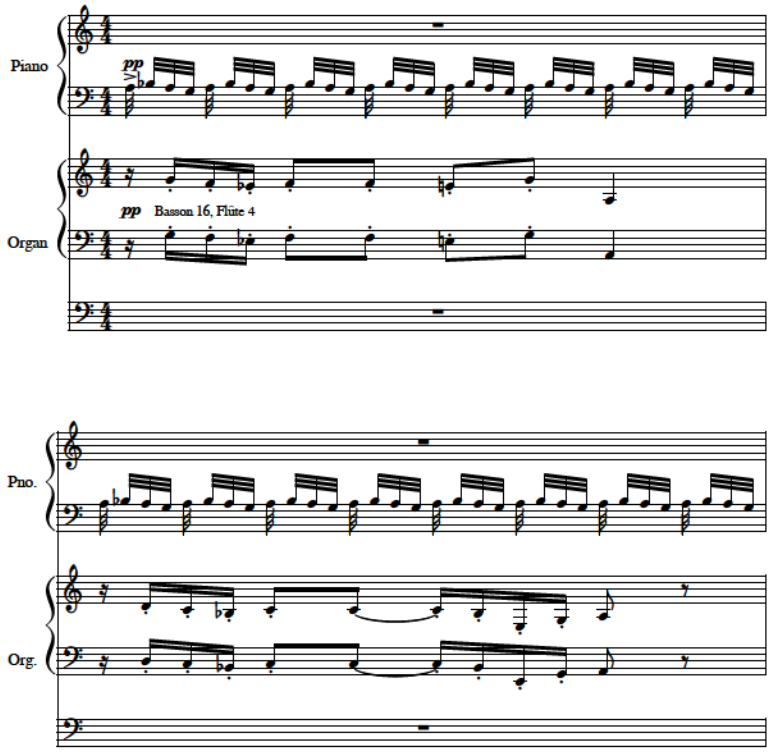
Figure 3.1. Structure of the *Ballade*.

The identification of four sections can be apparent upon first listening. However, finding the principal themes can prove to be complicated. Dupré's melodies tend to be short, which creates an issue when identifying themes, both visually and aurally. Delestre's and Pagett's analysis of the themes proves this point. Delestre states that there are two themes--one cantabile and the other animato, which correspond to the four sections that alternate cantabile and animato tempi.[5] However, he does not indicate measure numbers for the themes. One could assume that there is one theme for the Cantabile section (mm. 2ff) and another theme for the Animato section (mm. 67ff). According to Pagett, Theme A starts at the second measure while Theme B starts at

[4] Pagett, 454.
[5] Delestre

measure 15 in the piano.[6] Both of these occur within the first cantabile section. If we take Pagett's view as the basis for this analysis, the themes can be challenging to discern because they share a three-note 16th anacrusis.

Another challenge that arises is that Dupré's themes undergo modification in each recurrence. At times, the transformed theme is easily recognizable. For example, although the rhythm of Theme A's return in the second section has dramatically changed, the pitches and contour of the melody remain close to the original theme.

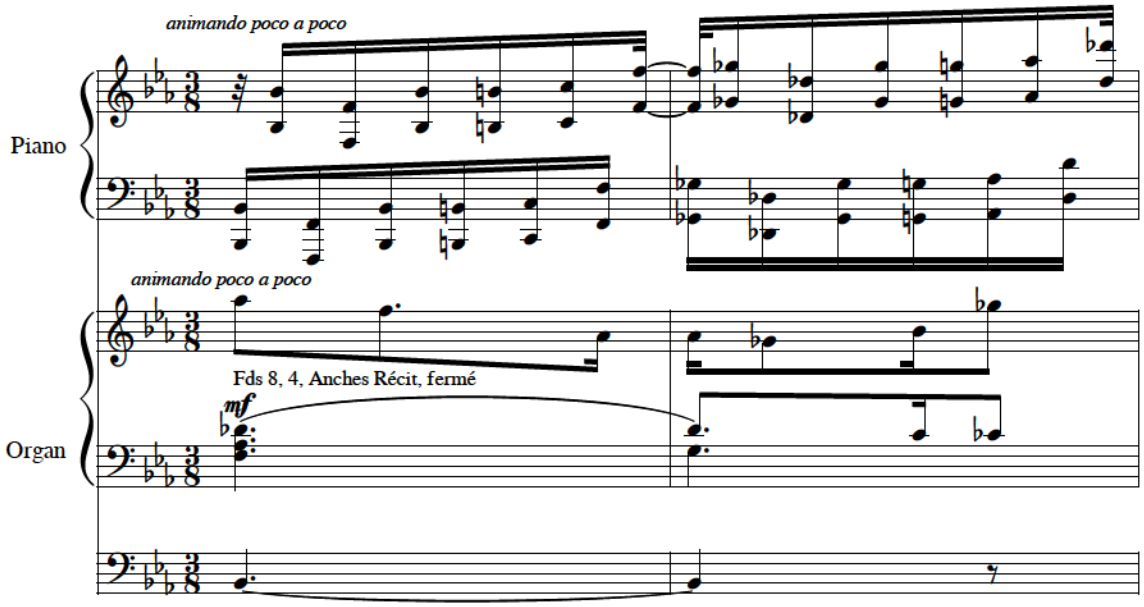


Example 3.5. *Ballade*, mm. 73–74 showing modified Theme A.

In other instances, the modified recurrences of the principal themes take on a completely different shape with only a hint of the original melody intact. For example, Theme C, seen at the

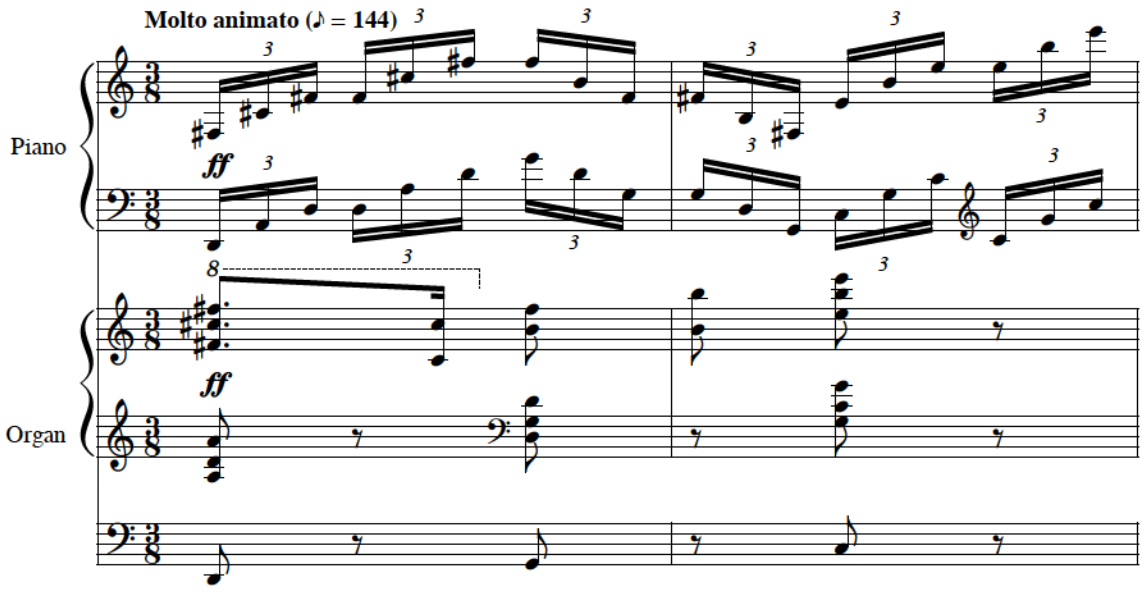
[6] Pagett

Cantabile return in the third section (mm. 85ff), also appears at the end of the third section in the organ.



Example 3.6, *Ballade*, mm. 102–103 showing modified Theme C.

Here, one could infer that the right-hand melody resembles the descending and ascending shape of Theme C. Additionally, the longer second note emphasizes the second beat, which is one of Theme C's distinguishing characteristics. However, its next occurrence is less recognizable.



Example 3.7. *Ballade*, mm. 112–113 Theme C remodified.

Dupré modifies the rhythm with the dotted note on the downbeat of the measure. Additionally, he creates a hemiola through the harmonic changes every two beats (seen in the D Major Seventh, G Major Seventh, and C Major Seventh harmonies) and punctuations of the chordal seventh root in the organ pedal line. The melodic contour of Theme C remains. One could argue that this passage's relation to Theme C is only speculative, as Pagett does.[7] However, I believe the relationship between these two instances is viable as this sequential passage still retains the dotted rhythm from Theme C.

Dupré's works are pitch-centric rather than tonal. This pitch-centricity plays a role in the formal structure of Dupré's works, and the clue for the key lies in the use of pedal tones that signify the tonal center. In defining centricity, Straus states that:

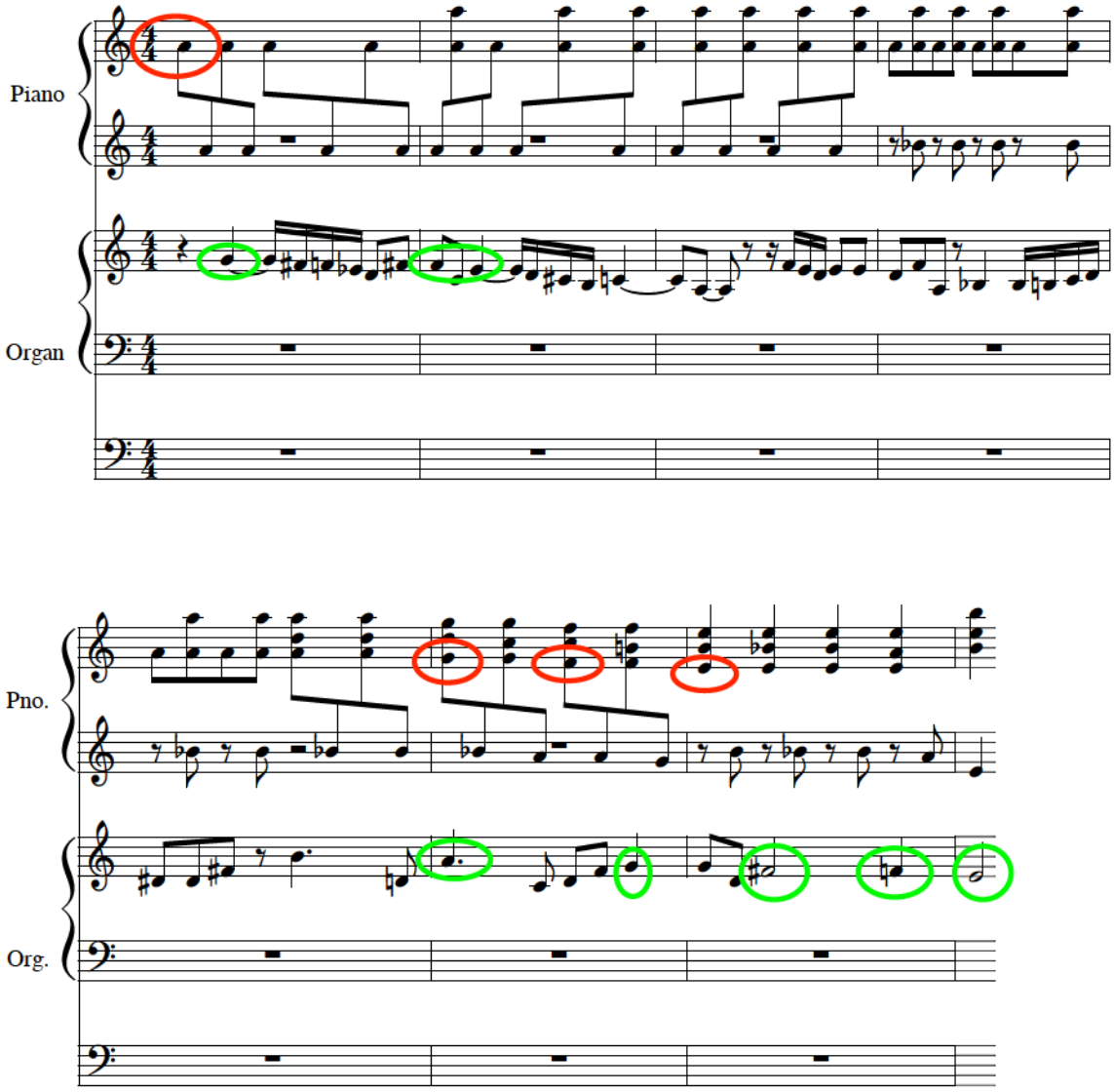
> A great deal of post-tonal music focuses on specific pitches, pitch classes, or pitch-class sets as a way of shaping and organizing the music. In the absence of

[7] Pagett, 454. Pagett calls this passage a "closing theme formed by major seventh chords" and states that any "derivation from earlier themes is quite conjectural."

> functional harmony and traditional voice leading, composers use various contextual means of reinforcement. In the most general sense, notes that are stated frequently, sustained at length, placed in a registral extreme, played loudly, and rhythmically or metrically stressed tend to have priority over notes that don't have those attributes.[8]

During the introduction, the piano anchors the tonal center through the repeated A4 pedal tone. The organ evades a sense of tonality by starting the melody on G4 (as the seventh degree of the scale) and with its chromaticism (with the entire gamut of chromatic pitches used except G♯) during the first statement of the theme. Additionally, A4 becomes a center point where added pitches surround it—another common technique to reinforce the pitch center.[9] The A4 pedal tone becomes decorated with B♭4 and open fourths and fifths before making a Phrygian descent (seen through the use of half-step F natural) to the new tonal center on E Phrygian. The circled pitches in the example below show how both instruments pull the tonal center from A to E. The notes circled in red indicate the Phrygian descent in the piano, and the green shows the descent in the organ.

[8] Straus, *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*, 131.
[9] Straus, 134.



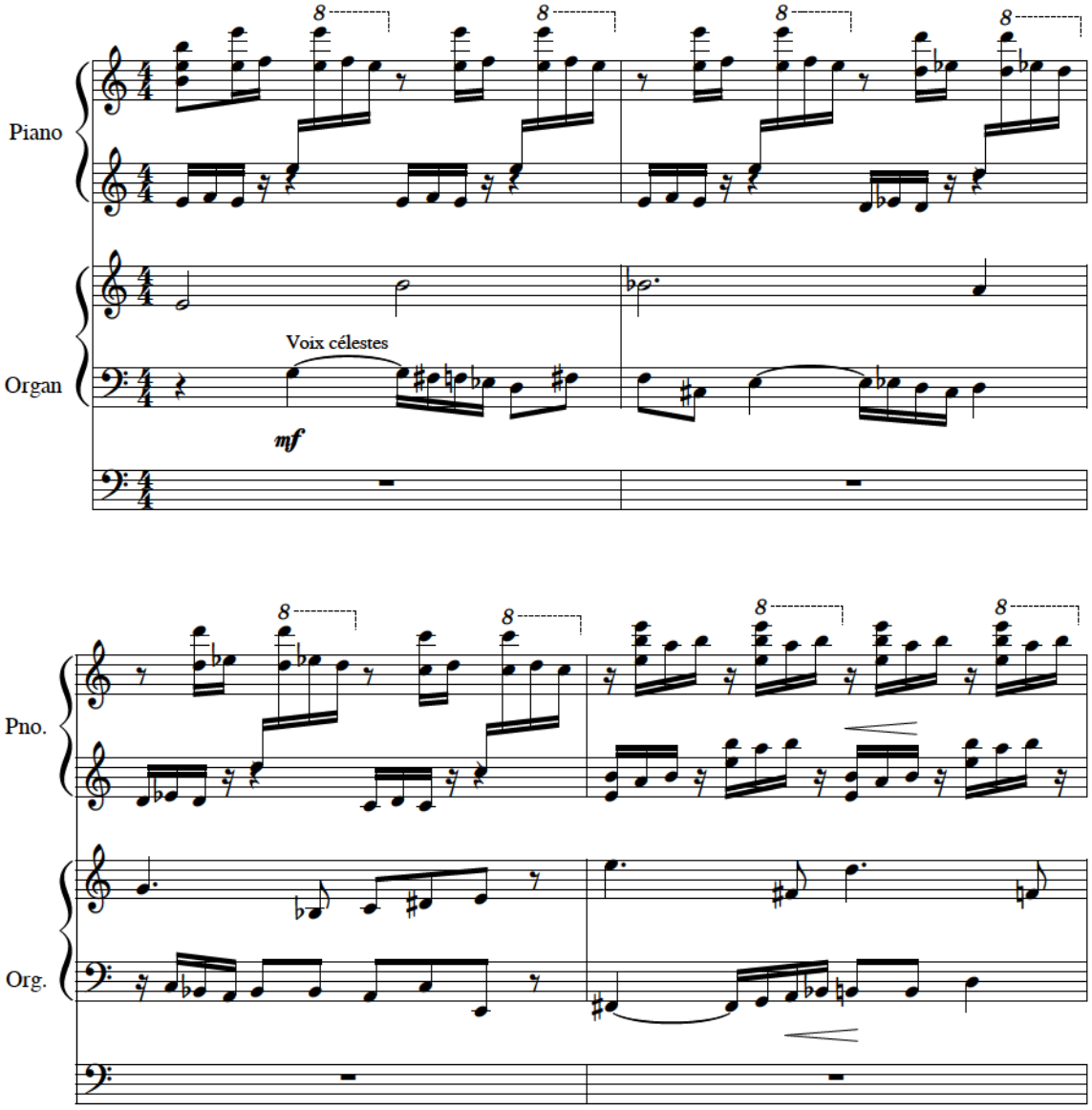
Example 3.8. Example showing the Phrygian pull to E in the *Ballade*, mm. 2–9.

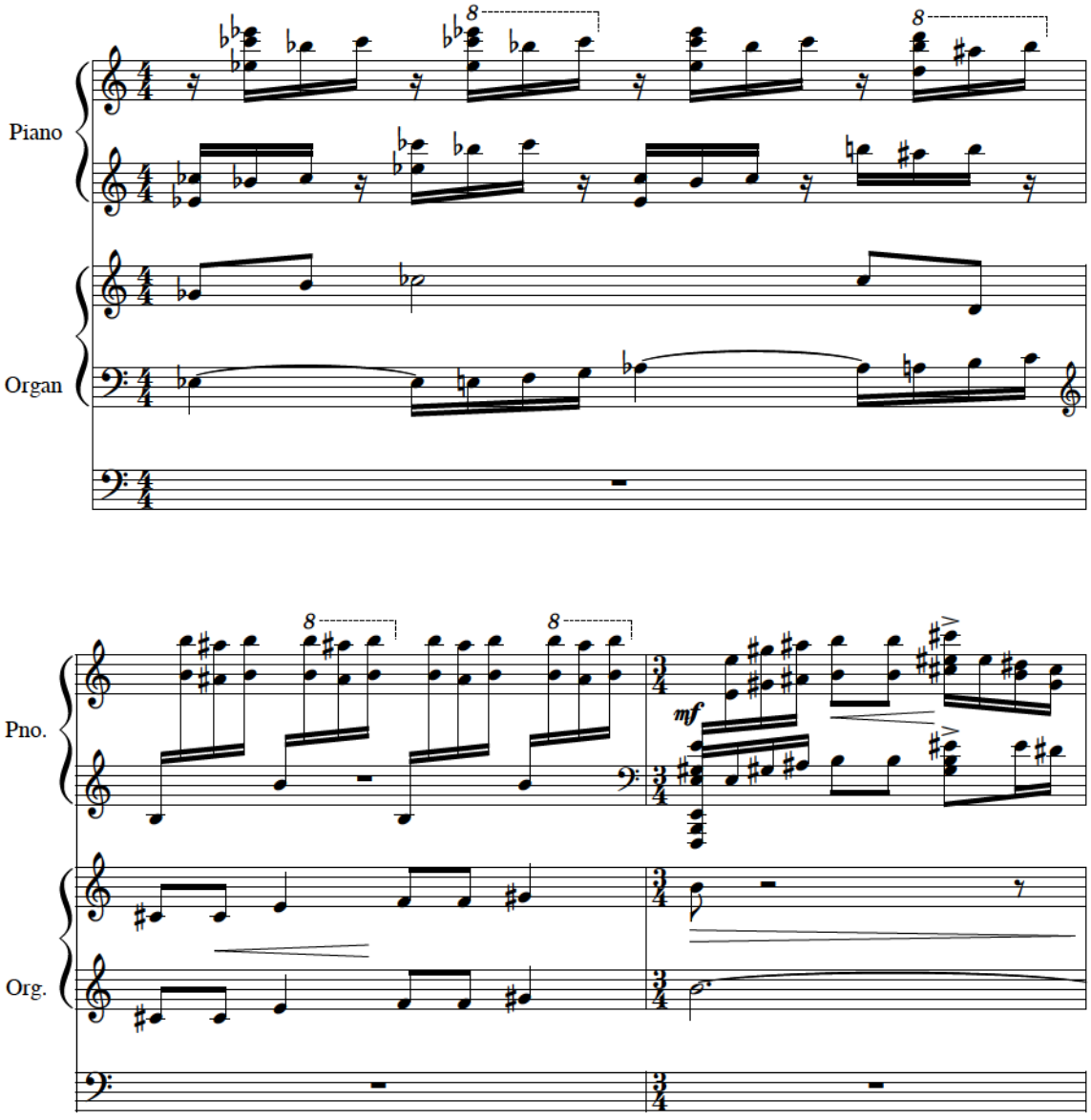
During the second statement of Theme A (mm. 9–14), the chromaticism increases and leads to momentary instability as the tonal center briefly shifts downward from E to C before returning to E (m. 12). In measures 10–11, a further sense of instability occurs as Dupré uses enharmonic relationships that obscure the pitch center. E♭ becomes the temporary center by its octave

doublings in the piano. B♭ (the fifth) and C♭ become B and A♯ in the ornamented piano pedal tone on E, which function as a dominant of E Lydian (mm. 10–11). The arrival of E Lydian coincides with the introduction of Theme B. Additionally, this is the first strong confirmation of a tonic arrival in the key of E emphasized in the piano's bass register (mm. 15–16), which then moves to a sustained organ pedal tone in the same octave (m. 17).[10] Straus also states that placing tonal centers in registral extremes creates centricity.[11]

[10] I consider this arrival of E to be a stronger confirmation of the tonal center than the previously repeated pedal tones. First, this is the first time the bass register has been used in either instrument for the entire piece. The bass register brings a stronger sense of stability because of its function in tonal music—a characteristic that can be shared in pitch centric music.

[11] Straus, 131.


Piano
Organ
Voix célestes
mf
Pno.
Org.


Piano
Organ
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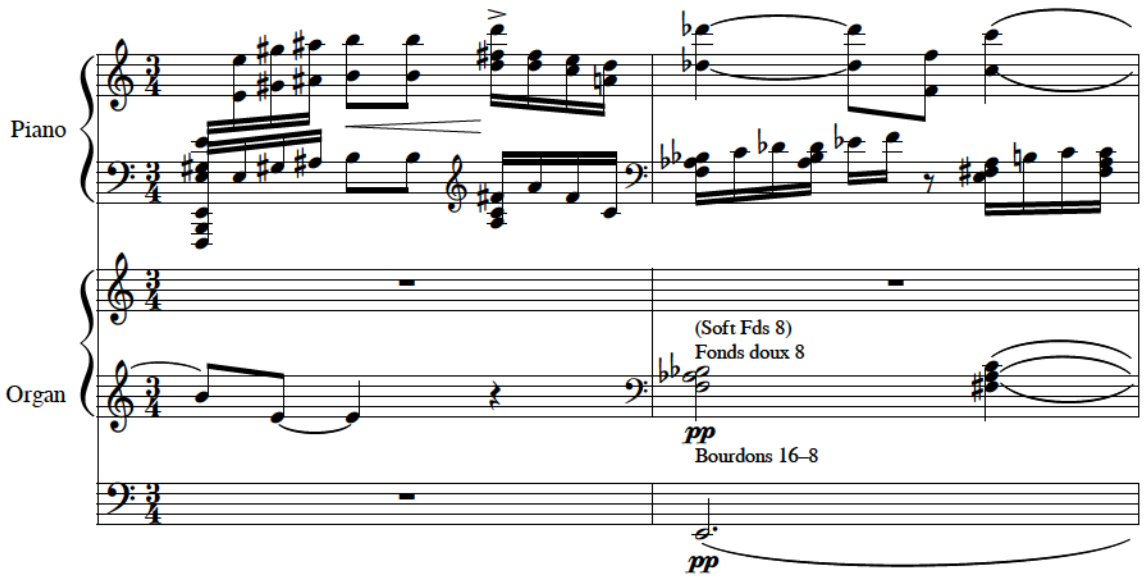
8
Pno.
Org.
8
8
mf



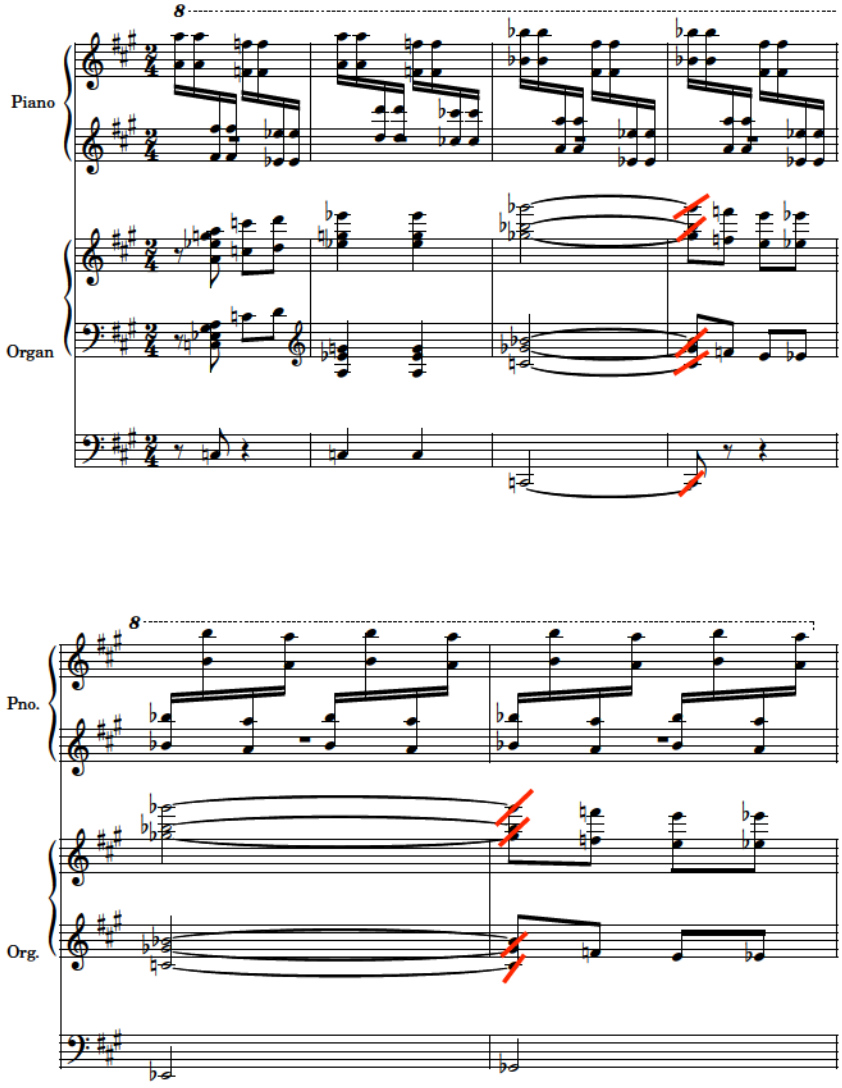
Example 3.9, *Ballade*, mm. 9–17.

After this initial presentation of Theme B, the pitch center moves up a minor third to G Lydian (m. 23). The key centers continue to shift, which can be noted by referring to the organ pedal's sustained tones (m. 26ff). Based on Straus's techniques and the examples above, the musician should easily find the remaining tonal centers.

3.2 Performance Issues

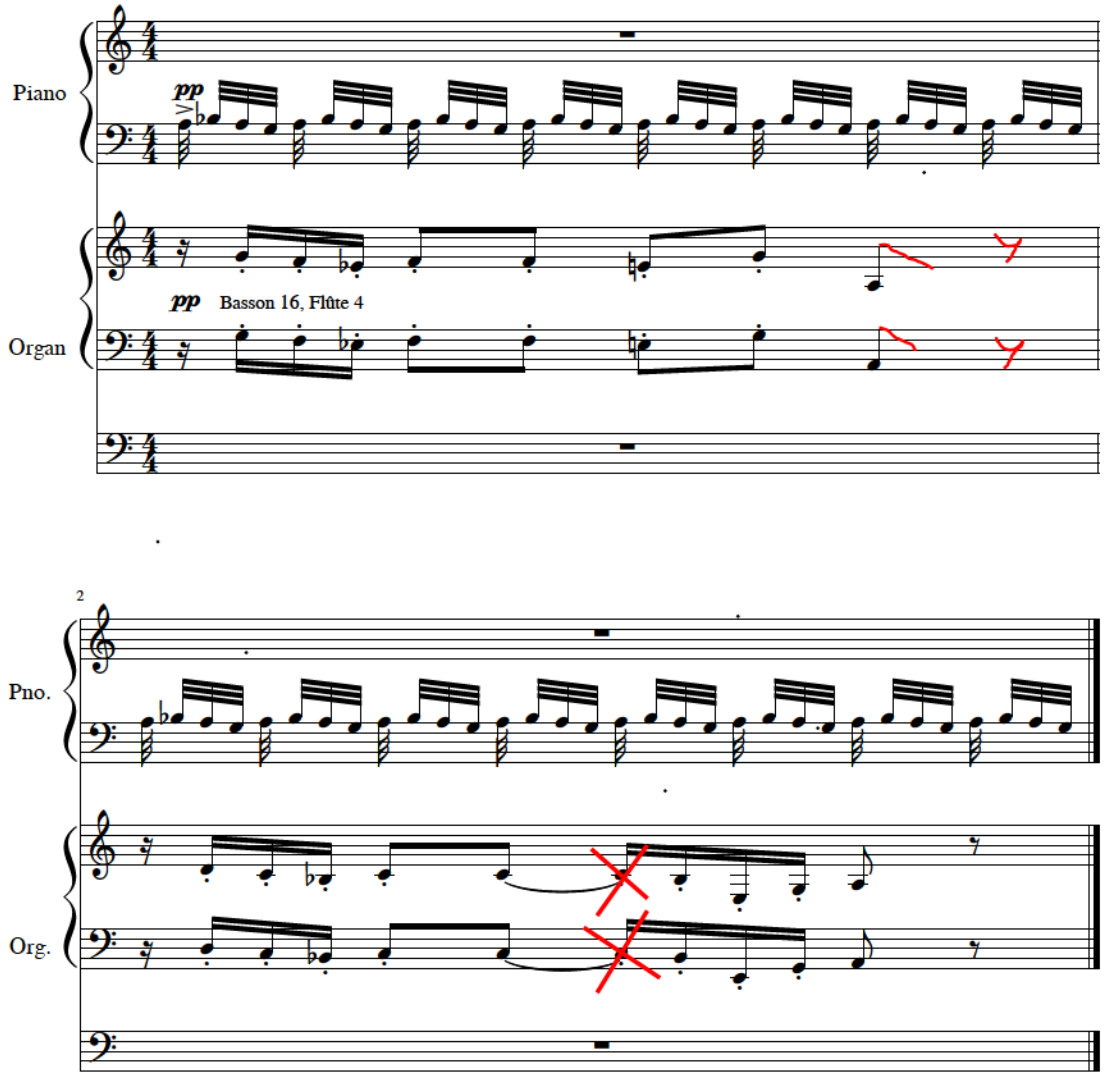
One of the primary performance issues to address is touch, articulation, and acoustic. On the organ, shortening the notes at ends of phrases in fast tempos will help clarify the rhythm and pulse, especially in more reverberant rooms or when the piano and organ are not located within the same proximity. It will take longer for the organ sound to dissipate after the release in more reverberant rooms. Also, when the organ is located on the balcony and the piano on the stage, the organist will only hear the delayed sound coming from the piano. To solve these two acoustical issues, the organist should shorten the notes so that the pianist (and audience) can hear the pulse

from the organ more clearly. Also, having the organist play ahead of the beat heard from the piano will avoid the problem of the organist sounding late to the pianist (and to the audience). Shortening note values becomes more critical in louder passages as it becomes more difficult to hear the piano.



Example 3.10. ***Ballade*****, mm. 262–267 indicating shortened tied notes.**

Even some softer passages require the organist to shorten notes. In the second section (mm. 73–84), the organist could shorten the notes at the end of the modified first theme. Doing so will ensure that the piano's downbeat in measure 74 will be heard by both the ensemble and the listener, especially in a reverberant acoustic. Dupré calls for the *Basson* 16' and *Flûte* 4'. As the speech of many reed stops can be slow and thus sound late to the listener, shortening the notes will help provide for the entrance of the following phrase. The example below illustrates a solution.



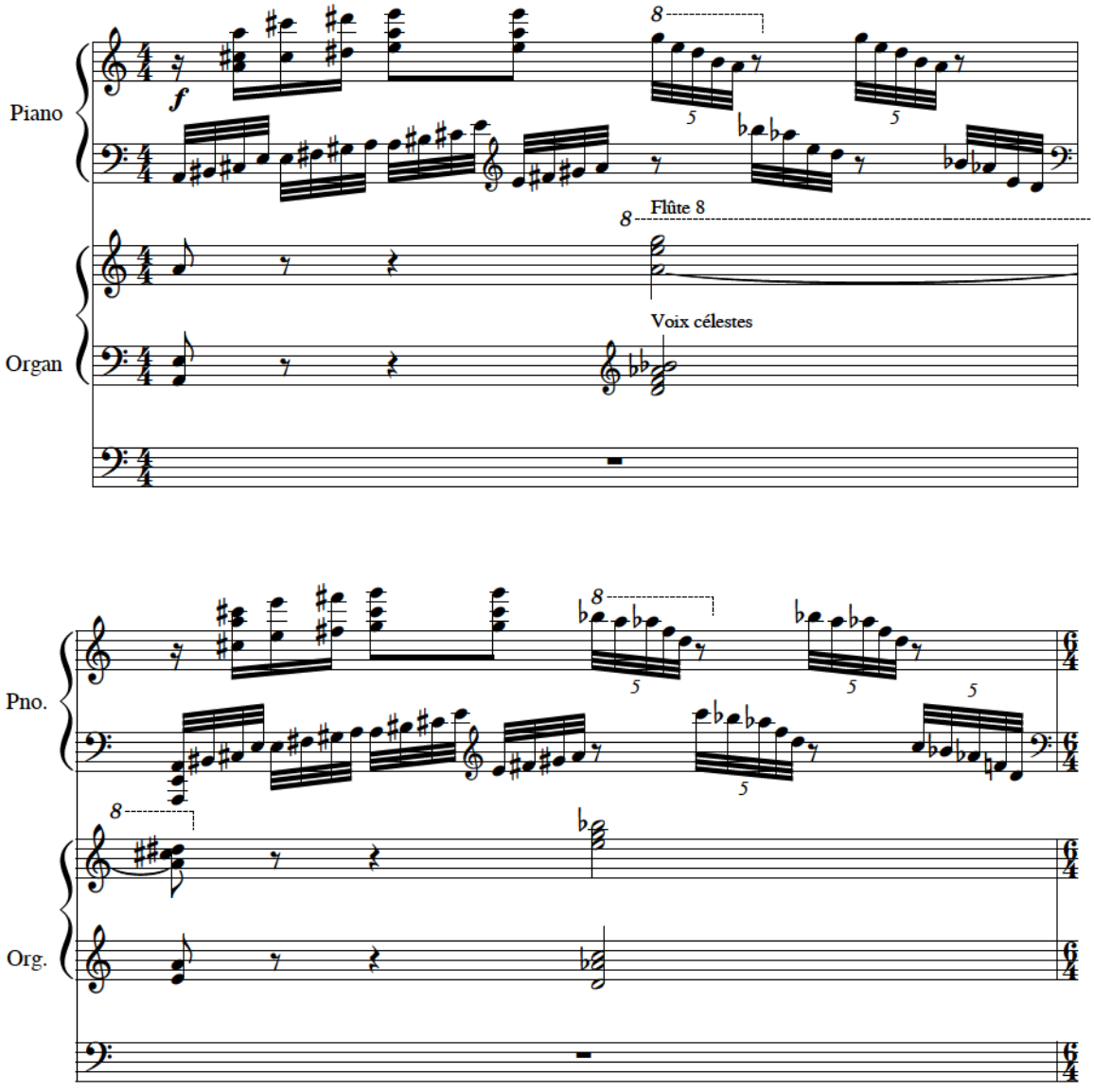
Example 3.11. *Ballade*, mm. 73–74 with shortened notes.

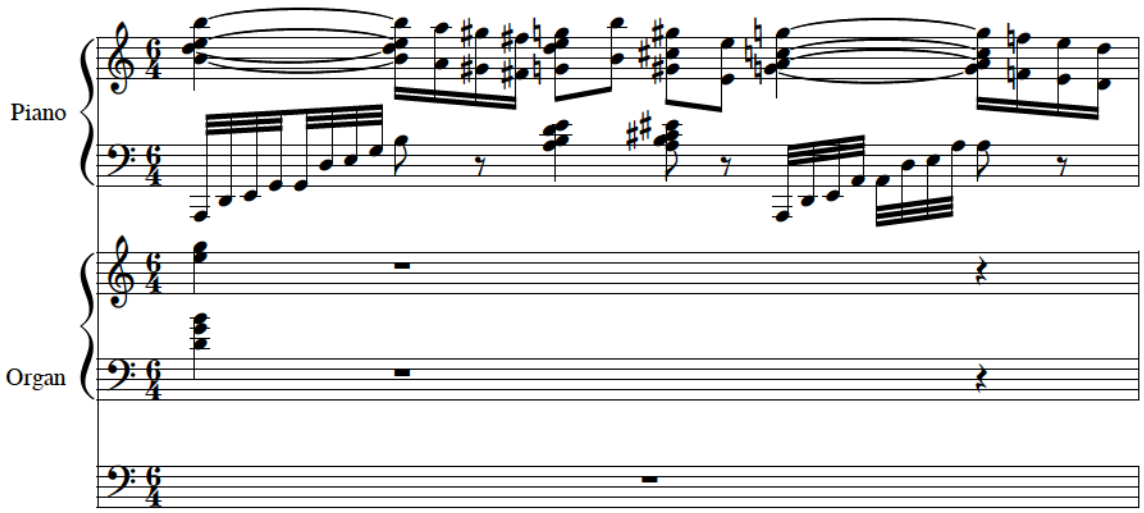
Additionally, the organist should consider releasing tied notes earlier than indicated in the score to clarify the beat and to help the entrance of the anacrusis sixteenths to arrive on time (m 74, b. 3). The organist will need to experiment with how much articulation is too much. An overly detached sound can cause the pipes to speak insufficiently. Additionally, an overly pronounced articulation breaks the longer melodic line. It is advisable to have another person listen to the organ and piano in the room, concert hall, or church to judge the musical results. Recording devices can also serve this function.

The performers will need to address issues of balance between the organ and piano. In general, the percussive attack of the piano will be louder than the softer stops of the organ. Therefore, the organist and pianist will need to work together by employing a combination of the following strategies: (1) having the organist open the swell box when playing on the softer stops even when the dynamic is *piano* or softer or (2) having the pianist play more softly.

An example of this balance issue is in the second section (mm. 73–84). At the beginning (in Example 3.11 above), the organ enters with a modified Theme A on the 16' *Basson*. Although the pianissimo dynamic would suggest closing the box, the organist might experiment with opening the box slightly to allow the lower register of this stop to be heard clearly. Additionally, the pianist must stay in control of the *pianissimo* dynamic indicated throughout this section, even as the piano ascends in the register (which might invite the performer to play louder even when a crescendo is not indicated). Otherwise, the piano will overbalance the organ. Observing Dupré's indicated dynamics will ensure a satisfactory balance, especially as a crescendo is only indicated in the piano at the end of measure 79.

Another example occurs during the transition before the third section (m. 80–84) when the strings and flutes accompany the 32nd note figuration played forte on the piano.

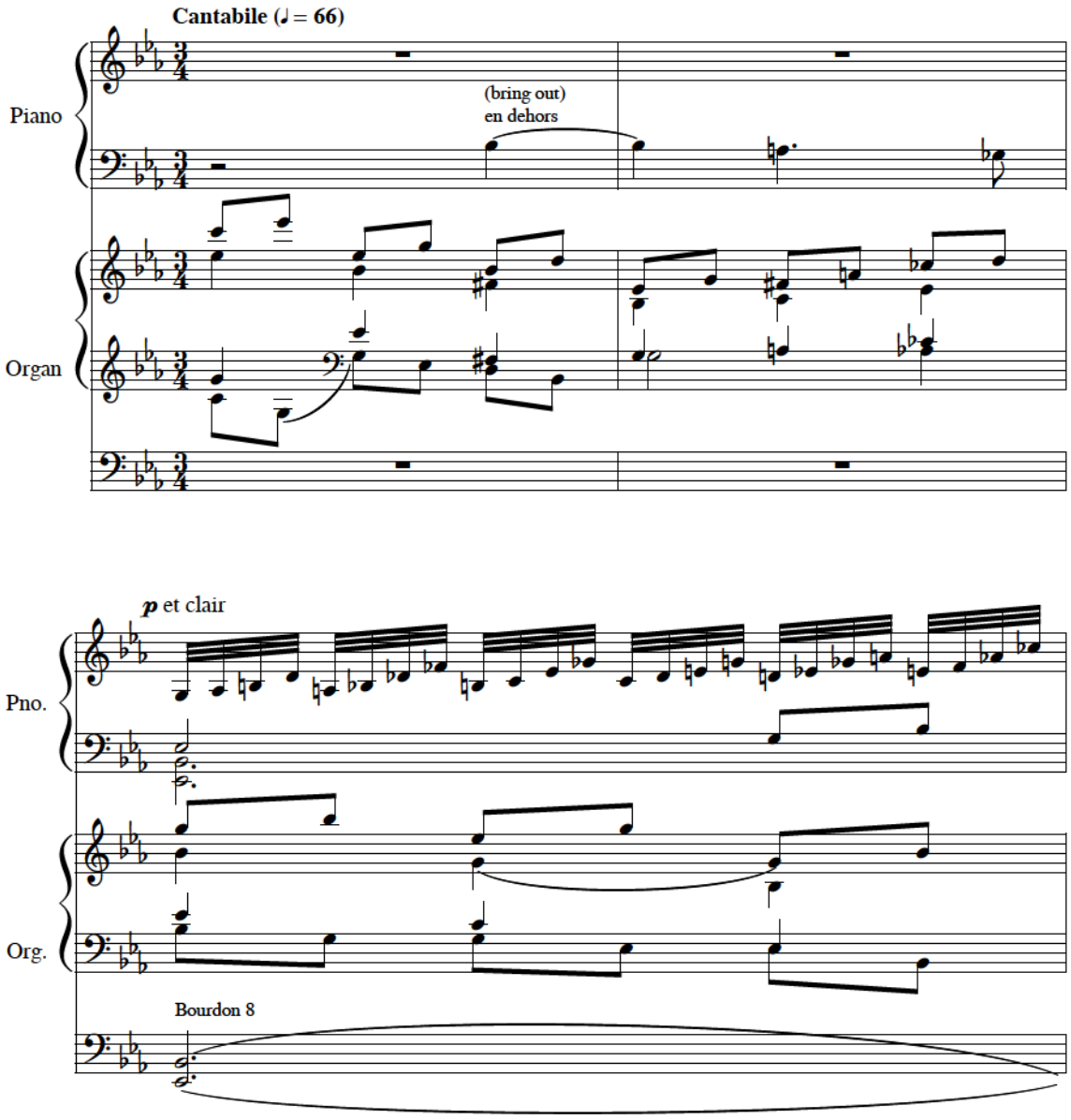

Piano
Organ
Flûte 8
Voix célestes
Pno.
Org.



Example 3.12. *Ballade*, mm. 80–82.

Balancing these two contrasting timbres will bring out the orchestral texture in this section. Organ flute stops, especially those of the harmonic type appropriate to the French Romantic organ, tend to have a more substantial presence in the treble register than string stops. The flutes play in a higher register while the strings are in the middle register. Thus, the organist might need to open the box to hear the strings, especially against the piano figuration, in which the percussiveness of the piano will cut through more than the organ chords.

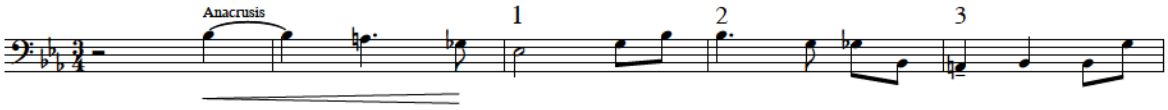
The constant motivic transformation throughout the *Ballade* makes it challenging to recognize the theme in each of its appearances. This transformation presents opportunities for interpretation, especially when one considers whether hypermeter should play a role or not in shaping the phrase. For example, during the opening of the third section (mm. 85–101), Theme C, first heard in the tenor line of the left-hand piano part, appears modified through different placements within a strong-weak hypermeter.



Example 3.13. *Ballade*, mm. 85–87.

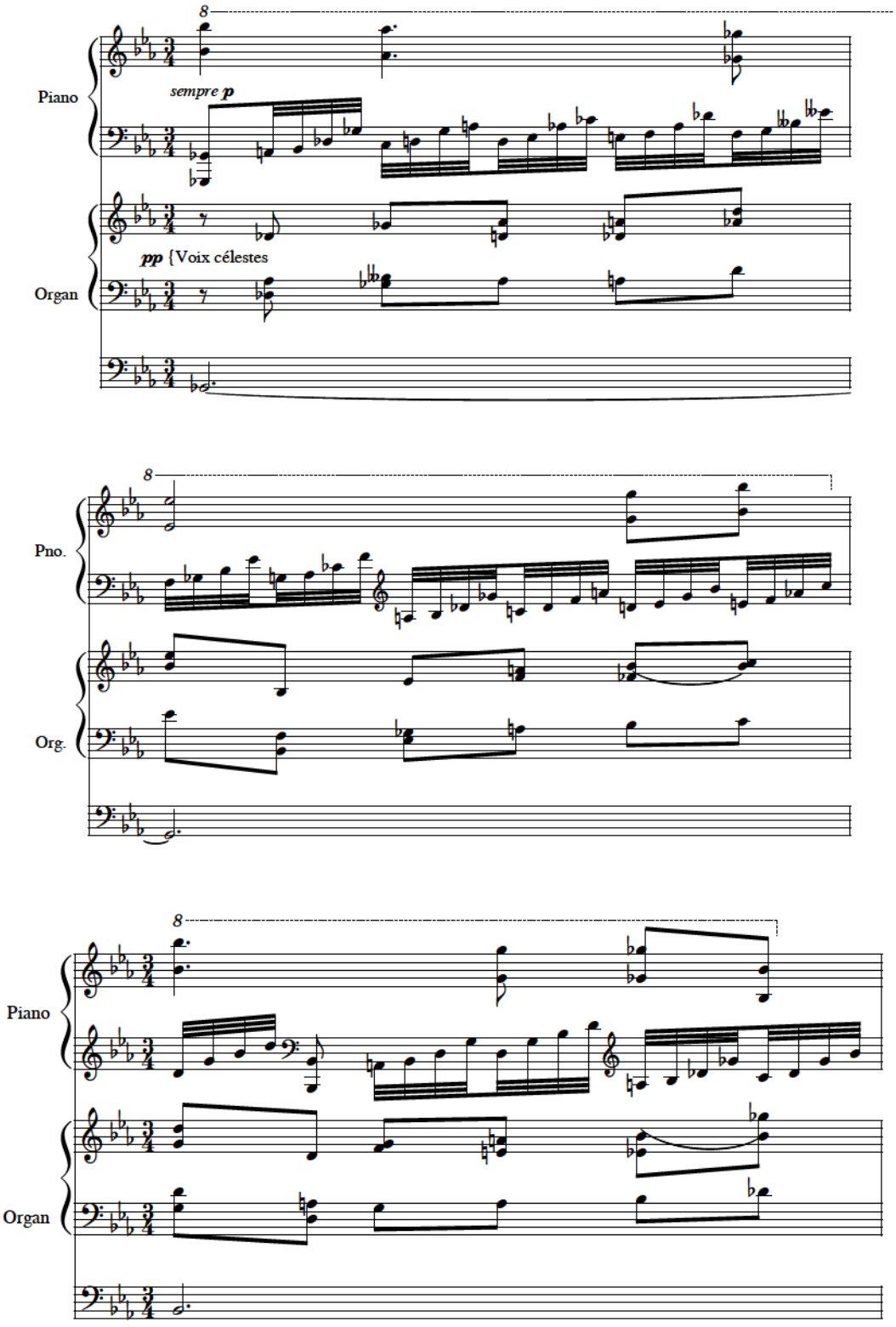
Here, the melody enters discreetly in the tenor voice of the piano. Additionally, its entrance on the anacrusis of the newly established simple triple meter (m. 85) contributes to its subtle entrance. The arrival pitch of the melody coincides with the E-flat/B-flat tonic/dominant underpinning provided by both instruments (m. 87), further supported by the start of new figuration in the right hand of the piano marked *piano et clair* (soft and clear). Taking the

hypermeter into consideration could affect how the pianist shapes the melody. A reduction with the hypermetric analysis and suggested expression is below where the E-flat receives the emphasis.



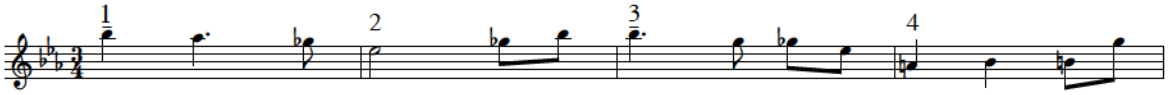
Example 3.14. *Ballade*, mm. 85–89 showing the suggested hypermeter.

However, the subsequent appearance of Theme 3 puts the melody in a different part of the hypermeter. Here, the first note of the melody (B♭) arrives on the downbeat (instead of the anacrusis), and the first three notes become part of the strong measure. Several formal elements coincide with the placement of the hypermeter, including the harmonic change to G♭ major on the downbeat, a new accompaniment pattern in the organ that begins on the downbeat, and a change in registration and timbre to strings.



Example 3.15. ***Ballade*****, mm. 95–97.**

The following harmonic change two bars later on G♭ first inversion further suggests that the hypermetric emphasis has shifted from the initial appearance of Theme 3. Given the above reasons, the performers could inflect Theme C differently from its initial appearance. Performers can use Dupré's placement of the melody within different parts of the meter to influence the phrasing of each theme.



Example 3.16. Reduction of mm. 95–98 showing the modified Theme C in the new hypermeter.

3.3 Registration

Delestre states that one could transcribe the organ part for orchestra if one follows the indicated registrations.[12] This statement emphasizes the importance of timbre in Dupré's music, which the composer carefully specifies in the score.[13] However, merely lifting the notes from the organ score and transcribing them for an instrumental ensemble does not automatically make a satisfactory orchestral part. The organ writing in the *Ballade* (as well as the other organ and piano pieces) is idiomatic to the organ. The organ was Dupré's primary instrument. A successful orchestral transcription would require rewriting several passages to fit each instrument in the orchestra. When using the imitative orchestral stops, the ranges often go outside the equivalent instruments. For example, in the required range of the organ *Clarinette* theme (B2–F♭5) in the

[12] Delestre, 98.

[13] Timbre also plays a vital role in much of French organ music, where it is customary for composers to specifically show which stops or timbres they desired in the music.

transition section (mm. 26–38) would be difficult on a single clarinet.[14] In the organ and piano works, Dupré is writing idiomatically for the organ because the registrational aids (such as pistons and reversibles) help him achieve orchestral effects. Indeed, the passages using the imitative reed stops can *remind* one of an orchestra. Nevertheless, these pieces are conceived for the organ and not as an orchestral piece adapted to the organ.

Dupré calls for a wide range of timbres from imitative orchestral stops to Neoclassical registrations. Smaller organs can present issues in obtaining the specific timbres indicated by Dupré. For example, during the development of Theme A (m.9), the indicated registration is *Voix célestes* at *mezzo forte* in the left hand and *Hautbois* in the right hand. This registration is possible on a large organ with more than one set of strings (which includes a string and its celeste) and/or solo reed stops on different manuals. However, setting his specific combination can create an issue if the strings and Oboe come from the same Swell division. Additionally, both stops need to be under expression in separate boxes so that the *Hautbois* can crescendo and diminuendo at the pianissimo level while the *Voix célestes* plays at mezzo forte. This registration is possible on Dupré's house organ in Meudon, where multiple sets of strings can be found on both the Swell and Solo divisions; the *Hautbois* can be found on both the Swell and Solo divisions.[15] Also, the string stop would need to be strong as Dupré indicates it to be played from *forte* to *pianissimo* dynamics.

String stops can present a registration issue as they are often the smallest family of stops on an organ. Additionally, the French organ *Gambe* stop has a particular color that can be

[14] Although an alto clarinet could cover the range in this passage, this particular instrument is mainly used in wind ensembles and not orchestras. Samuel Adler, *The Study of Orchestration,* 3rd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), 215.

[15] The specification does not indicate if the Hautbois is a duplexed stop or an independent rank on each division. As having a duplexed Hautbois in the Swell would affect swell box balance between the Oboe and Strings, then using the Strings of another manual (the Solo Gambe and Celeste) would be ideal.

difficult to emulate. While its rich overtones add a keen intensity to the foundations, the stop blends with the foundation stops.[16] A narrow string stop that in a swell box is ideal. A narrow-scaled principal such as Violin Diapason or Salicional could substitute for the *Gambe*.[17] If the organ has super couplers, coupling the string (or strings) could also help brighten the timbre and make it louder, but make sure to maintain the 8' as the dominant pitch level between the string stop and oboe so that the counterpoint is not compromised.

For the opening *Hautbois* stop, a *Clarinette* or another solo reed color could substitute if using the *Hautbois* is not possible.[18] The French *Hautbois* has a delicate tone that blends well with the foundation stops in the French school. However, many organs have oboes that function as secondary trumpets. In this case, using an enclosed reed stop of soft quality would be ideal. The organist should explore using stops at 4' an octave lower or 16' an octave higher to get the desired result.

In the following *Piu animato* section (mm. 28–42), Dupré creates a dialogue between the solo reed colors of the organ. Again, an American orchestrally inspired instrument is ideal as many EM Skinner organs during the time had these imitative stops. It might be necessary to make some substitutions for sounds. If a *Clarinette* is not available as a stop or not available on a different manual from the Hautbois, then try a combination of 8' 4' and 2-2/3' stops to substitute. Dupré calls for the *Cor* at measure 39, and many organs do not have a French horn stop. However, Dupré provides a solution in *Symphonie Passion*, Op. 23 during the first movement

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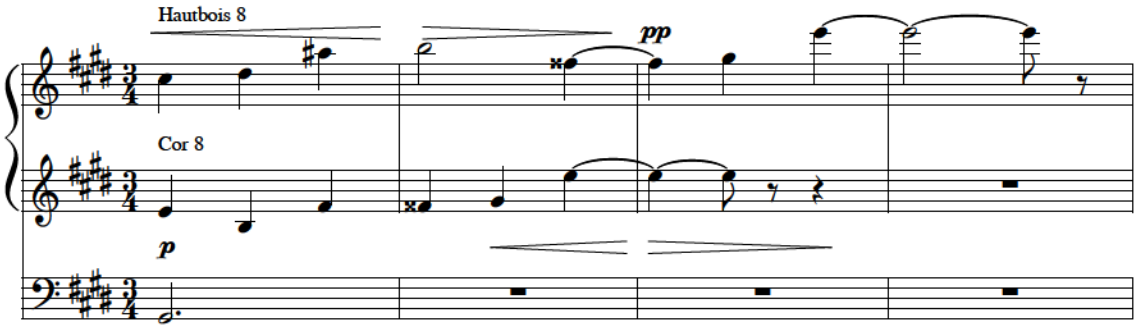
[16] William Goodrich, *The Organ in France* (Wayne Leupold Editions, 2006), 54. Here, Goodrich is comparing the French *Gambe* with the early 20th century American Gamba, which was constructed under different aesthetics. Although organ building has come to embrace French qualities during the 20th and 21st centuries, there are still many tonal differences between French and American organs.

[17] Goodrich, *The Organ in France*, 80.

[18] Pierre Cochereau substitutes the Clarinette for the Hautbois and augments the Voix celeste with a 4' Flute as a solution on his home organ recorded with Marguerite Dupré in 1956. Marcel Dupré, *MARCEL DUPRÉ: L'ouvre pour Piano*, François-Michel Rignol (piano), Lorraine Lacaze (piano), Marguerite Dupré (piano), and Pierre Cochereau (organ), recorded 2017 and 1956, Solstice CD SOCD348, 2017, CD.

"*Le Monde dans l'attendte du Sauveur*." At measure 103, Dupré calls for the *Flûte harmonique* in the left-hand eighth notes to substitute for the French Horn. A harmonic flute would certainly work here in *Ballade*. Dupré has yet another solution in the second variation of the *Two Themes and Variations*, where the alternate *Cor* registration is *Hautbois et fonds*. I have also found that a Principal or Diapason of horn-like quality is also effective.

Dupré supplies expressive crescendos and diminuendos throughout the score, indicating the need for divisions to be placed under expression. The *Récit* would have been under expression in the French tradition, but some passages suggest multiple swell boxes would be preferable if available. For example, the end of the transition section (mm. 38–42) features a dialogue between the solo reeds (*Hautbois*, *Clarinette*, and *Cor*) of the organ to be played on separate manuals. Here, Dupré supplies each voice with dynamics on separate staves, thus suggesting multiple enclosed divisions. The *Hautbois* would be located in the *Récit* and the *Cor* in another division.



Example 3.17. *Ballade*, mm. 38–42.

For ensemble registrations, a problematic registration includes the *Gambes* 16' 8' 4' indication (m. 53).[19] Dupré, inspired by American orchestral organs with significant string

[19] Dupré also employs this registration in the solo organ arrangement of *Cortege et Litanie*, Op. 19 (1923).

divisions,[20] calls for this incisive color during the build-up to the second section. This particular registration could be challenging to emulate on many organs. If the instrument contains a string rank, then apply the sub and super couplers if available. One alternate solution is to gather all the strings from all the divisions and couple them into the Great division. Since this is an ensemble registration, coupling the manuals together would not create registrational issues as in the smaller solo combinations above. Another solution is to substitute string stops for stops that have a sharp sound. For example, a 16' Quintadena can substitute for the rare 16' manual string. A soft and narrow 4' Principal could substitute for the 4' string.[21]

Dupré often calls for gapped registrations linked to Neo-Classical practice. During the Animato of the second section (m. 73), the modified Theme A is registered with the *Basson 16'* and *Flûte 4'*. This registration should be feasible on many organs. A short-length resonator reed with quick pipe speech might also be an ideal substitute for the quick detached 16th notes. Another gapped registration *Bourdon 16'* and *Cymbale* occurs twice during the piece (m. 172 and m. 226).[22] Here, the customary 8' pitch is eschewed for a soft 16' and a high-pitched mixture. Being a stopped flute, the 16' Bourdon already avoids the fundamental tone, emphasizing the upper partials compared to an open flute, which will exhibit a more fundamental tone. The *Cymbale*, emphasizes the higher partials at unisons and fifths. During the second appearance of this combination (m. 226), the registration creates a shimmering and scintillating sound for the toccata figuration between the organ and piano.

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[20] Orpha Ochse, *The History of the Organ in the United States* (Bloomington & Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press), 352.

[21] On the C.B. Fisk organ in Auer Hall, I used the 16' Quintaton, Salicional 8', and the 4' Violina to emulate the timbre of the Gamba stops. With its strong quint overtone, the Quintaton works well as a substitute for a 16' Gamba, especially when combined with other string stops.

[22] Dupré also calls for this registration in the "Prelude" from *Prelude and Fugue in A-flat Major*, Op. 36, No. 2.

The *Ballade* represents Dupré's first exploration combining the organ and piano. Clearly, Dupré understood the strengths of each instrument and composed idiomatically for them. The organ consists of sustained pitches stays in the middle register of the keyboard, and makes effective use of the stops to emulate orchestral timbre. On the other hand, the piano contains more active passagework due to the decay in the piano sound. At times, Dupré helps achieve an automatic balance between the two instruments through tessitura. For example, the pianist will often play in the higher register in octaves when the piano takes on a melodic role, which allows it to be heard over the organ accompaniment. However, I found that I had to thicken the indicated organ registrations with foundation stops in quieter passages so that the organ could balance with the percussiveness of the piano.

In summary, the performance challenges include shortening notes on the organ to clarify texture, adjusting the organ registrations for balance with the piano, and reaching the character of French organ sound on various instruments.

Chapter 4: *Variations on Two Themes*, Op. 35 (1938)

Dupré wrote *Variations on Two Themes* in 1938. He dedicated the work to the memory of Alexander Glazunov (1865–1936),[1] a Russian composer and friend of Dupré.[2] As with the *Ballade*, Dupré and Marguerite gave the premiere performance of this work on September 29, 1937, at Grace Episcopal Church in New York City.[3] Another performance took place on October 18, 1939, at Yale University.[4] Both of these organs were large American Orchestral instruments.[5] Given the performance venues and registration indications, the *Variations on Two Themes* were written with French and American orchestral instruments in mind.

Dupré had already explored the variations form in *Variations sur un vieux Noél*, Op. 20 (1922) for organ and the *Variations et ut dièse mineur*, Op. 22 (1924) for piano. As with these earlier works, the *Variations on Two Themes* is a work comprised of melodic variations. Each variation is set in a different key, meter, and character. This chapter will combine structure, performance, and registration into the discussion of each variation.

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[1] Rollin Smith, "The Organ and Choral Works of Marcel Dupré: an Annotated Listing" (TAO, May 1986), 66.

[2] Steed, *The Organ Works of Marcel Dupré*, 72.
Russian émigré composers Alexander Glazunov, Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943), and Nikolai Medtner (N.S. 1880–1951) were frequent guests at Dupré's home when musicians were seeking refuge in Paris during the 1930s. Medtner was Marguerite Dupré's piano teacher.

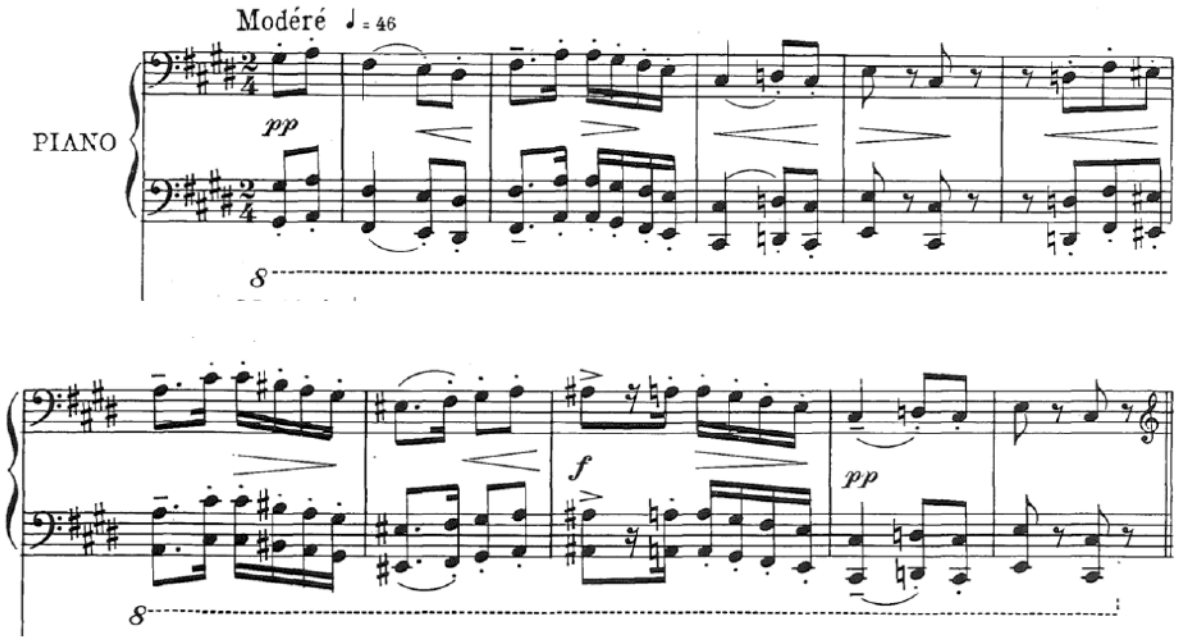
[3] Smith, "The Organ and Choral Works of Marcel Dupré," 66.

[4] Pagett, 455.

[5] The organ at Grace Episcopal during 1937 was Op. 201 of the Skinner Company. The specification can be found here: http://www.nycago.org/Organs/NYC/html/GraceEpis.html#Skinner201; Three possible organs could have made part of this performance: https://pipeorgandatabase.org/organ/23690 or https://pipeorgandatabase.org/organ/7117 or https://pipeorgandatabase.org/organ/7334

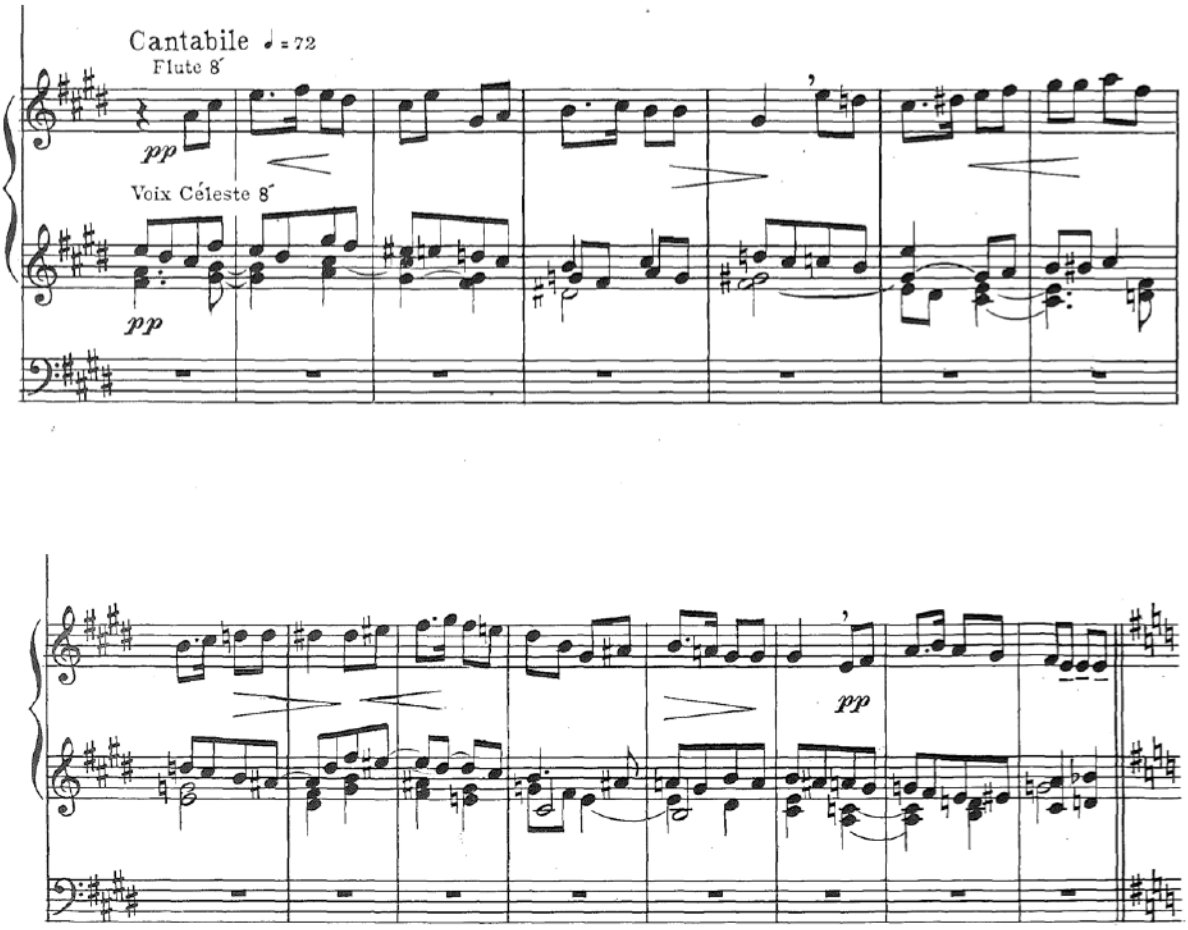
The Two Themes

The *Variations on Two Themes' interest* lies in how Dupré writes a rare type of variation form known as the double variation.[6] The two themes (labeled Theme A and Theme B) form a contrast.



Example 4.1. ***Variations on Two Themes*****, Theme A, mm. 1–4.**

[6] I refer to the Classical double variation (instead of the Baroque variation found in dance forms), which has two themes. Although occasionally used, the double variation has a distinguished compositional lineage, especially in Haydn and Beethoven. Afterward, the form was seldom used.



Example 4.2. ***Variations on Two Themes*****, Theme B mm. 11–25.**

Several of the variations work in pairs, as indicated in the figure below.

Themes A and B
Variations 1 and 2: develop A and B
Variations 3 and 4: develop A
Variations 5 and 6: develop B
Variations 8 and 9: treat B and A canonically
Variations 12 and 13: simultaneous use of A and B between the piano and organ

Figure 4.1. ***Variations on Two Themes*** **variation pairing.**

Theme A

Theme A opens in the home key, C♯ minor. This stepwise melody is set in the lower range of the piano and with octaves creating a dark timbre. Additionally, Dupré includes meticulous articulation marks in the piano part, which makes touch an essential aspect of this theme. Organists strive to control the duration of notes by taking care of the attack *and* the timing of the release because the sound sustains until the organist releases the key. On the other hand, pianists do not need to be meticulous regarding the key release because the sound decays immediately after the attack. Dupré meticulously marks the piano part, almost treating the instrument like an organ. Therefore, the pianist should pay attention to the duration of each articulation mark as an organist does. Hold the pitches with tenuto marks in the piano part at measures 2 and 6 while making sure not to slur them with the following staccato marks.

Additionally, Dupré makes a difference between eighth notes with staccatos (as in m. 1 and m. 3) and ones without articulation (m.4). In particular, the pianist will need to hold the eighth notes without articulation for their full value instead of playing them staccato. The variety in articulation gives the melody shape differently from pianists, who create dynamics through changes in arm weight.

Intriguingly, Dupré tends to use only fragments of Theme A while presenting Theme B in its entirety in the following variations.

Theme B

Theme B is a complete contrast to Theme A—it is lyrical, legato, placed in a higher register, and contains more leaps in the melody. The left hand of the organ, with its three-part texture, requires carefully planned substitution and finger/thumb glissandos to play as legato as

possible. As legato playing can create muscular tension, find a fingering that allows for freedom of the fingers, hands, wrists, arms, and shoulders. One alternate solution would be to use any manual to pedal couplers available. The organist could easily couple the left-hand manual part to the pedal and take the lower notes of the accompaniment into the pedal to make legato playing easier for the hands.

It is worth considering if Dupré intended for the accompaniment to be played entirely legato. Given the vast stretch required to play three independent voices in one hand, playing legato in a thorough-going manner becomes extremely difficult. One reason to perform all legato is that the melody has breath marks while the accompaniment does not contain any indications to lift the fingers off the keys—Dupré carefully marked the previous theme; therefore, the performer could assume that Dupré did not intend for any additional articulation to be added in Theme B. Additionally, if the organist couples the left-hand manual to the pedal as suggested above, then legato becomes more feasible. However, if the performer must play the accompaniment in the left-hand only, then a perfect legato is impossible.[7] One solution is to lift the inner voices while keeping the outer voices legato, which would create the illusion of legato playing. Also, a generous acoustic can mask any slight gaps in articulation. Practice achieving articulation that is as smooth as possible to help create a lyrical accompaniment under the vocal melody.

Although the registration of a flute solo paired with a string accompaniment is feasible on most organs, smaller organs of two manuals may only have a stopped flute 8' instead of an open flute for solo passages. In this case, a 4' flute played an octave lower could substitute, especially

[7] Dupré' inserts a slight lift when legato is not possible in his recording of *Cortege et Litanie* at St. Sulpice. Marcel Dupré, *Cortège Et Litanie*, performed by Marcel Dupré, in *Marcel Dupré: The Mercury Living Presence Recordings*, Remastered edition, Mercury, 2015, CD.

if it is an open or tapered flute. In a three-manual organ, it is possible to couple two flutes from separate manuals to bring the solo out against the strings, which is essential when the flute goes into the lower register while the strings make a voice overlap the flute (m. 23).

Variation 1: Theme A

The organist and pianist will need to differentiate between the variety of articulation markings. In particular, the slower speech of the reed stop (either the French Horn or *Hautbois*) will require the organist to stay in the key for a more extended period when playing staccato. The organist will need to play this variation on an expressive division to capture the dynamic range from *pianissimo* to *più forte*.

As with several variations in this piece (1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 12, and 14), the pianist starts playing before the organist—thus setting the tempo for the variation. When the organ is placed in a balcony or a remote position from the piano, there will be a delay in sound, which will make the first organ entrance challenging to coordinate the piano. If no visual or audio aids can be provided to the organist, the performers will need to experiment with how early the first organ attack needs to arrive for the instruments to sound together to the listener.

Variation 2 (mm. 39–66): Theme B

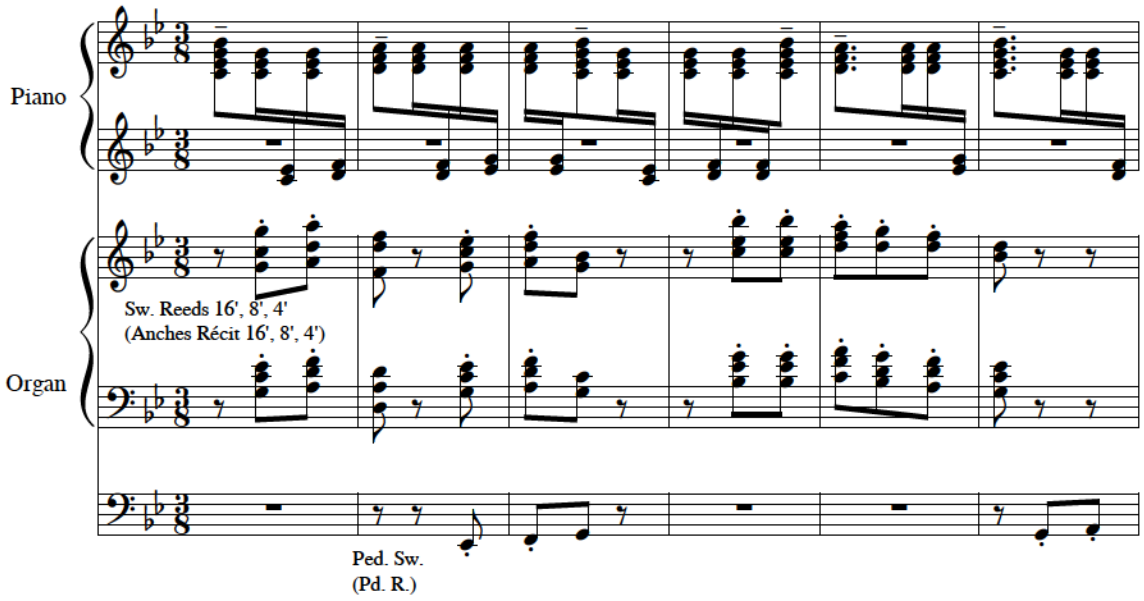
A rhythmic challenge arises in this compound meter through the use of hemiola found in the dyads. The melody appears in the piano part's middle voice while the organist supplies brief interjections between the phrases. At times, Dupré acknowledges the triple meter found in the melody and the organ interjections. On the other hand, he brings out the hemiola using the

dyadic nature of the chords that surround the melody in the piano part. The performers will need to decide how to nuance the phrasing while recognizing the layered meter inherent in the writing.

Hearing the softer string stops against the percussive piano creates an issue of balance. On every organ I played, the strings were too soft to play with the piano, even with the pianist playing softly. Super coupling the strings or adding a 4' flute stop plus tremulant might work better than adding 8' foundation stops, which obscures the undulating sound of the celeste.

Variation 3: Theme A

In this rhythmically active variation, the meter is more definite, especially with the tenuto downbeats of the piano part. Dupré shifts the accent of the beat through differing placements of tenutos as seen in the piano, which coincides with the organ articulation marked. Pay attention to the notes that do not have a staccato as these are meant to be played longer.



Example 4.3. ***Variations on Two Themes*****, Variation 3, mm. 70–75.**

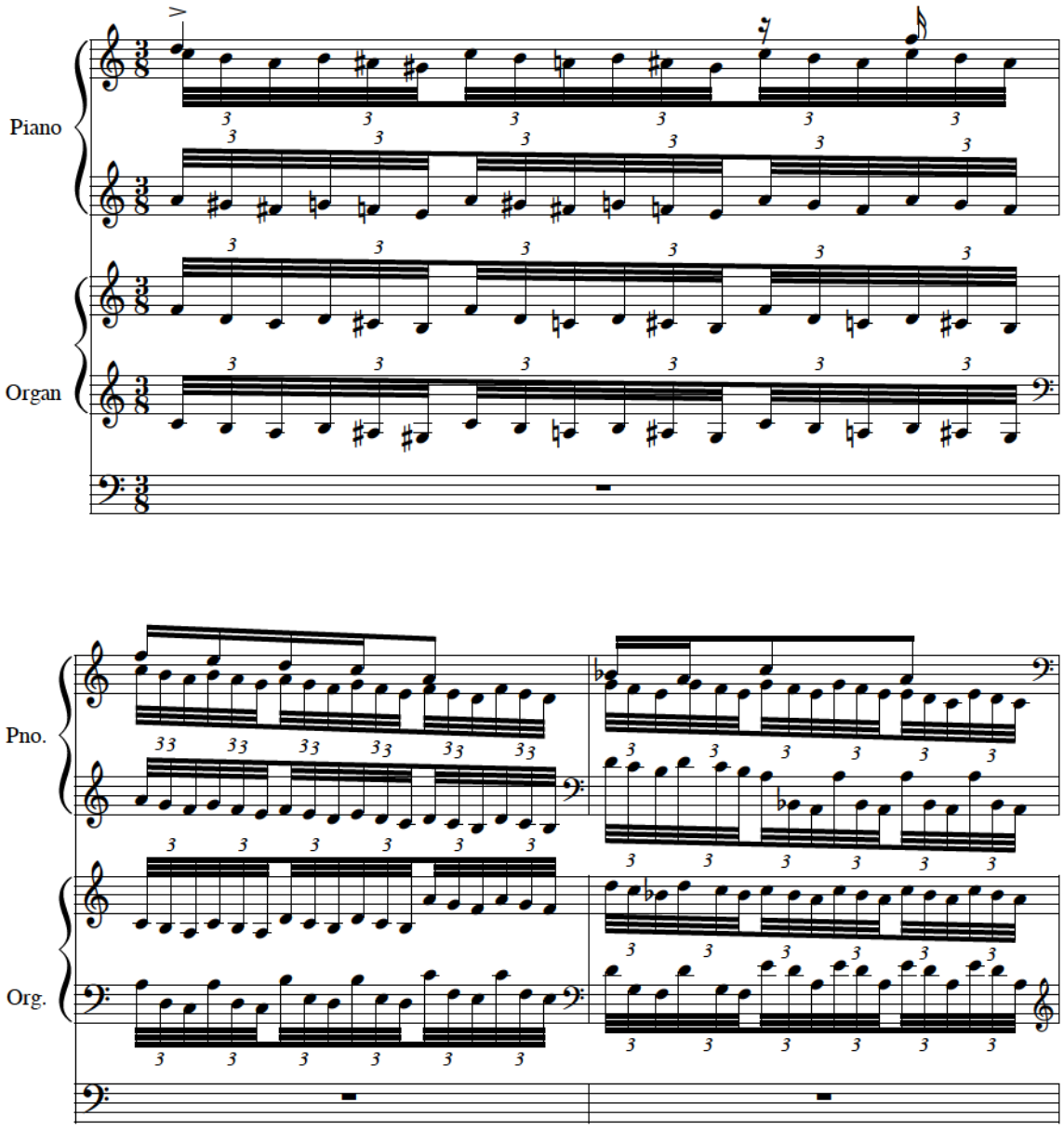
However, the differences in the organ and piano speech make rhythmic precision difficult. The piano should mostly play without using the sustain pedal to clarify the rhythm; for the tenutos, emphasize these chords without playing legato. Additionally, both performers should acknowledge the shifting metric accent of the tenuto (mm. 72–73). The pianist should consider shortening the dotted quarter note slightly to create more rhythmic clarity. The organist should do the same when the toccata accompaniment pattern transfers to the organ (mm. 93ff).

During the second half of the variation (mm. 93ff), the piano is set in a higher register, making it easier to hear over the full set of 16', 8', and 4' reeds of the Swell. However, the organist may need to experiment with the position of the swell shutters to balance with the piano.

Variation 4 (mm. 116–136): Theme A

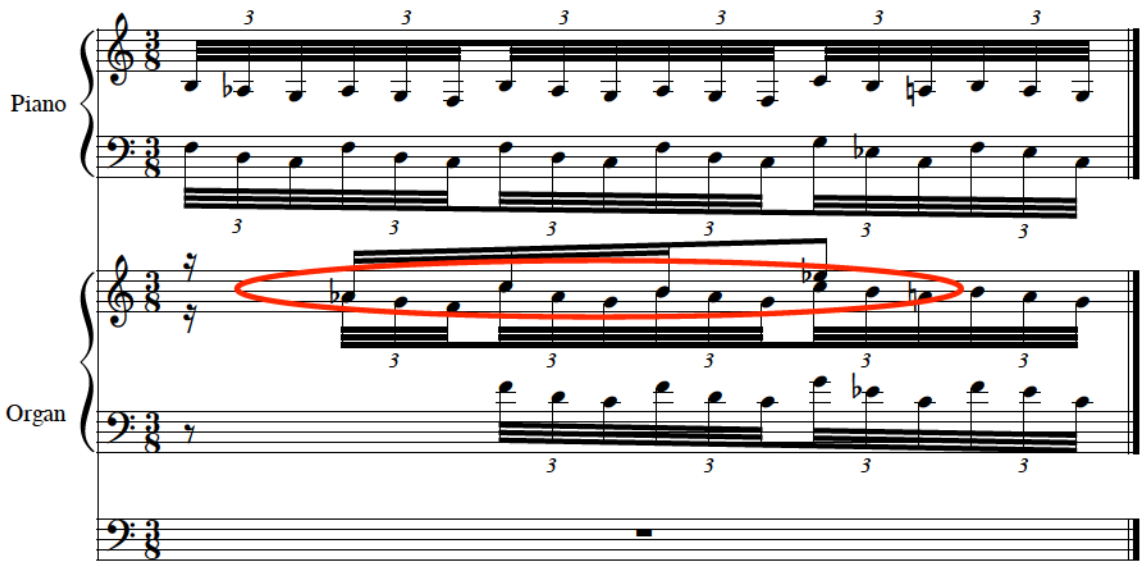
In particular, the fourth variation (mm. 116–135) presents one of the issues central to performing with the organ and piano—aligning the attack and release of tone together for two instruments that speak differently. Generally, Dupré accommodates these differences by writing idiomatically for each instrument—the piano is given the faster moving passagework to account for the decay in sound while the organ is written in a more sustained style as a wind instrument. At other times, he disregards this style, which creates a challenge for the performers. This variation is an example of the latter, especially in the parallel thirty-second note sextuplet passagework in thirds between the organ and piano. Matching the attack of this passagework between the two instruments makes this a problematic variation. To match the immediacy of attack in the piano, the organ flutes, indicated at 8' and 4', must speak quickly and clearly. I

suggest employing a *Schnellen* touch[8] to help clarify the texture. Finally, the pianist might need to play more softly when the organ has the melody (mm. 123–124 in the example below).



Example 4.4. ***Variations on Two Themes*****, Variation 4, mm. 120–123.**

[8] Laukvik, *Historical Performance Practice in Organ Playing: Part 2—The Romantic Period* (Carus Verlag: Stuttgart), 45.



Related to the issue of clarity is the tempo for this variation. I believe that the indicated tempo (*Rapide* at eighth note = 100 beats per minute) is too fast for the 32nd sextuplet figuration. Each instrument sets the figuration in parallel thirds; the resulting combination forms closely spaced chords between the two instruments, creating a dense texture for fast passagework. Although I do not believe the effect is to hear each chord distinctly--but as a flurry of figuration underneath Theme A--taking too quick a tempo makes it difficult for the piano and organ to speak together. Moreover, the organist will need to determine the tempo by listening carefully to the speech of the flutes—taking care that the pipes speak fully and clearly.

Variation 5 (mm. 137–155): Theme B

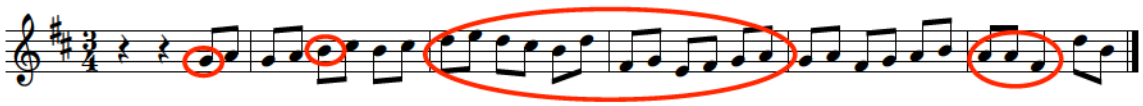
Variation 5 is the only solo organ variation, which is a four-part chorale on Theme B. The tonal center shifts and remains ambiguous throughout.

For registration, the French *Gambe 8'* has a particular color that can be difficult to find as it is not frequently interchangeable with the American Gamba. This issue is often the case in early twentieth-century American organs, where the American Gamba has a keen and sharp tone

to make up for the lack of upperwork.[9] Although the French *Gambe* adds brighter overtones to the foundations, it also blends with these stops. Therefore, make sure to choose a string stop of medium volume. The flute/string hybrid Gemshorn, a smaller scaled principal, or a Violin Diapason may suffice on other organs with no string stops.

Variation 6 (mm. 156–183): Theme B

The flowing eighth notes in the right hand make up an ornamented Theme B; the accompaniment has two voices in the left hand while the pedal starts with off-beat punctuations on the second beat (which settles to the downbeat in m. 162). The piano has delicate sixteenths, creating a shimmering obbligato over the organ part. The circled pitches below illustrate how Theme B is incorporated into the figuration.



Example 4.5. *Variations on Two Themes*, Variation 6, mm. 156–161.

Note the rhythmic durations of the punctuations in the organ pedal mentioned above. On beat 2, the punctuations are eighth notes like double bass pizzicatos; when the punctuations arrive on the downbeats, they are full quarters. Observe the full durational values so that the downbeats sound stronger than the upbeats. Treat the eighth notes like a pizzicato bass and the quarters as bowed notes in an orchestral manner.

[9] Goodrich. 79.

Although Dupré does not indicate phrase endings with slurs or breath marks, the organist may insert a break at the ends of the phrases to coincide with the original theme. These should occur at:

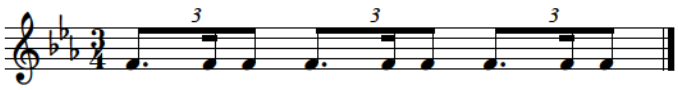
- measure (m.) 161 after beat (b.), 2
- m. 167, after b. 2
- m. 174, after b. 2

For situations that create acoustical problems, I found that moving the *molto ritardando* (at m. 182) to the last measure of the variation made it easier to coordinate the broadening tempo between the two instruments.

Regarding registration, the American *Trumpet* stop is typically too loud for this delicate variation, especially with the Trumpet indicated to be played softly against the figuration of the piano part. On the American organ, substituting the Trumpet for an Oboe with some foundation stops at 8' (and possibly 4') will approximate this sound.

Variation 7 (mm. 184–209): Theme A in organ

This central variation creates an intermediary climax to the piece. Set in F Dorian, the organ contains the first fragment of Theme A. The piano has the following ostinato, which creates a polyrhythm with the eighth notes of the organ lasting the entire variation.



As the music increases in dynamic to the climax of the variation, the organist might consider making the spaces between the repeated note pedal tone (mm. 193–197) more pronounced in reverberant acoustics to clarify the pulse for the pianist. The rich color provided by the 8' and 4' *anches and* the increasing dynamic will make hearing the piano more difficult for the organist.

Additionally, shortening the repeated pedal notes provides a contrast to the legato manuals and makes the beat more audible.

Variation 8 (mm. 210–228): Theme B in organ

This variation presents Theme B in the organ as a canon at the octave between the right hand and pedal. The piano contains a soft and light toccata pattern. As mentioned in the *Ballade*, consider shortening the dotted eighth notes in the theme for rhythmic clarity. I suggest that the pianist play this variation *senza pedal* to match the style of the staccato articulation in the organ part and keep the character of this playful variation.

Variation 9 (mm. 229–241): Theme A in piano

In Variation 9, the instruments switch melodic and accompaniment roles with the piano setting Theme A in canon at the octave; the organ continues with a modified version of the toccata pattern of the previous variation.

The *Voix célestes* registration creates a challenge for the organist as string stops can be slower in speech than flutes or principals. The organist will need to adopt a bright touch because of the repeated chord pattern in the accompaniment figuration. Shorten the sixteenth note to a thirty-second note followed by a thirty-second note rest to allow the repeated chord to attack at the correct time. Additionally, the organist will need to balance the accompanying string stops to the piano by adjusting the swell pedal. Despite the *pianissimo* marking, I found that fully opening the swell box helped balance the two instruments.

Variation 10 (mm. 242–257): Theme A in the organ and Theme B in the piano

For the first time in this piece, Dupré places the two themes together in a single variation. Here, the organ starts a dialogue with the piano between Theme A and Theme B, respectively. These two themes create a juxtaposition of styles—the organ sets Theme A in a horn-like manner while the piano answers using Theme B in *léger* (light) impressionistic octaves. The registration in the organ represents yet another example of a "French horn" registration. [10] Dupré provides the option to use the imitative French horn stop often found on early twentieth-century American Orchestral instruments or use a combination of *Fonds 8' et Hautbois*.

Variation 11 (mm. 258–275): Theme A in piano

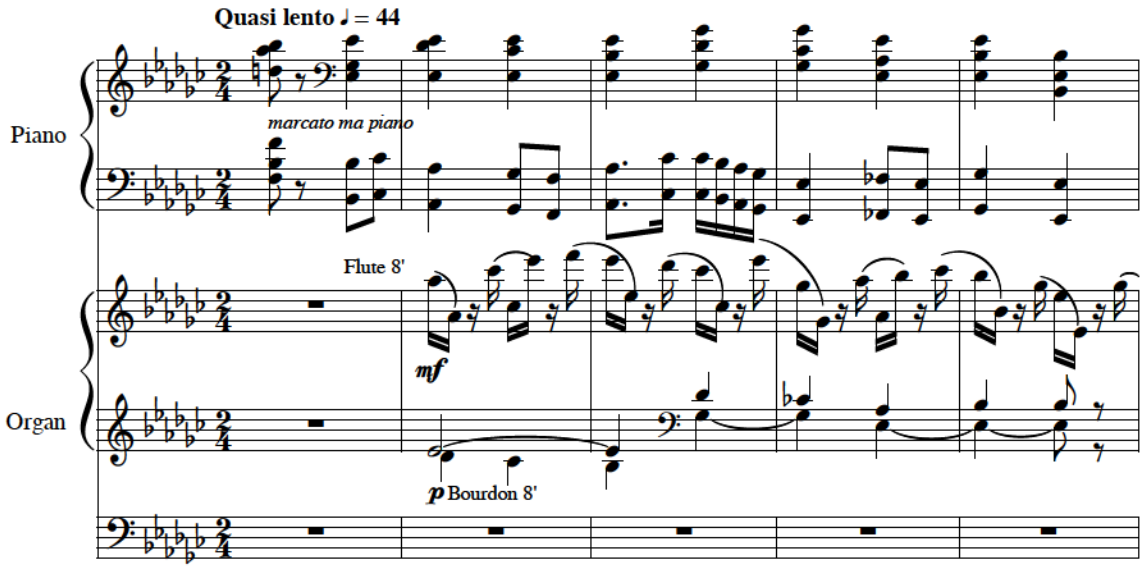
Variation 11 is the only variation for piano solo. Styled as an improvisatory cadenza, Theme A is heard as a dialogue between the right and left hands inverted. Dupré creates a rhythmic ambiguity through triplets in the accompaniment but with dyads (as in Variation 2). An implied polymetric structure results from the triplets and dyads—one where the melody is in common meter, which is set against the left-hand triplets that reinforce the 4/4 meter on the first and third beats but with chords that create a dyadic emphasis. Even with this dyadic emphasis in the left-hand triplets, keep a sense of line by shaping the right-hand melody.

Variation 12 (mm. 276–292): Theme A in piano and Theme B in organ

Variation 12 represents the first of the final three variations, all of which combine both melodies. The piano left-hand has Theme A, while the right hand of the organ has a highly

[10] This alternate registration contrasts with the one found in *Symphonie Passion*, Op. 21, which calls for a *Flûte harmonique* as an alternative to the French horn.

modified Theme B. The difficulty in this variation is in the right-hand leaps. With the indicated slurs, legato tenths might be unattainable with smaller hand sizes.



Example 4.6. ***Variations on Two Themes*****, Variation 12, mm. 276–280.**

Instead of stretching or spreading the fingers to reach the octaves and tenths, which will lead to injury as a result of a fixed and tense hand position, the organist should feel free to keep the hand in a more natural, relaxed position and allow the hand to leap between the wide intervals despite the legato slurs. Keeping the hand in a fixed position could result in a stiff, uneven, and detached sound. Allowing for more freedom of motion will allow the right-hand melody to sound more fluid.

Variation 13 (mm. 293–307): Theme A in piano and Theme B in organ

Variation 13 places Theme A in the piano and Theme B in the organ. The organ and piano form two complete contrasts: the organ is pointillistic with the doubled 16th-note pedal and

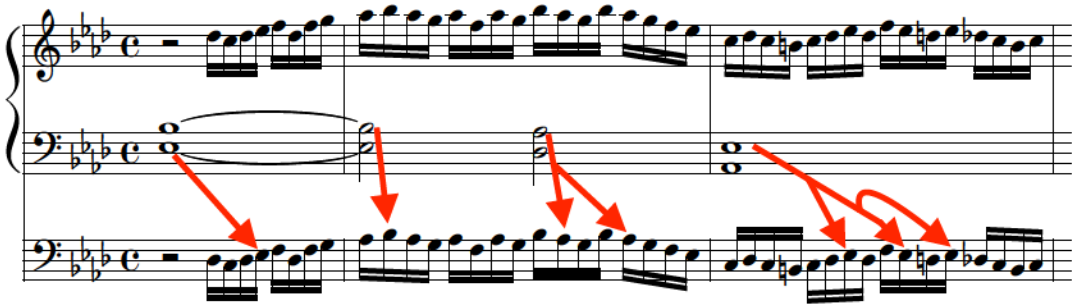
right-hand, while the piano is lyrical. To keep the ensemble together, the organist will need to lead this variation while the pianist listens because the organ part has the smallest subdivisions.

This variation makes for one of the most challenging and virtuosic passages for the organist. The pedal part has pervasive stepwise sixteenths (based on Theme B) that cover the lower and upper extremes of the pedalboard, which is mirrored in the right hand two octaves higher. To play this part accurately and with ease, I suggest rocking back on the sit bones, which allows the legs the freedom of movement needed to cover the wide range of the pedal part. Playing the pedals requires freedom of movement from the hip and upper leg.[11] When moving to the upper range of the pedalboard, shift the weight to the left sit bone, which allows the right leg to swing freely like a door to the upper part of the pedalboard. Then, shift the weight onto the right sit bone, which will allow the left leg to swing to the right (do the opposite to play on the left/lower side of the pedalboard). Organists can repeat this method as often as necessary to access the pedalboard extremities with ease. Keeping the knees together and pushing off the key creates a sudden shift of balance, which might create unnecessary tension. Although one might argue that shifting the weight between the sit bones creates an imbalance, fluid movement between the sit bones should create stability. Furthermore, the organist can achieve a sense of stability through the sustained fifths in the left hand. Organists can achieve more fluid motion up and down the pedalboard by shifting the weight from the sit bones rather than using the traditional pivoting method. Nevertheless, organists will need to find solutions that work with their bodies.

This variation also presents one of the most problematic registration issues in the entire work. Here, the pedal and right-hand play in octaves to create a most unusual orchestral color

[11] Thomas Mark, *What Every Pianist Needs to Know About the Body with Supplementary Material for Organists by Roberta Gary and Thom Miles* (GIA Publications, Inc.: Chicago, 2003), 134.

that goes outside the bounds of traditional French registration. In particular, the pedal registration indication—B*ourdon's 16', 8', Voix Céleste (4 feet coupler)*—requires a manual super coupler to the pedal, which might not be available. Simultaneously, Dupré's registration calls for a single string stop—a *Salicional 8'* without a céleste—in the left-hand accompaniment. Smaller instruments might contain only one string stop (usually located in the Swell). In such a case, coupling the Swell to the Pedal would create voice-leading issues, as seen in the example below.



Example 4.7. *Variations on Two Themes*, Variation 13, mm. 293–295.

For instruments with two manuals, a couple of alternative solutions include:

Option 1

Swell (left-hand)	Great (right-hand)	Pedal
String 8'	Flutes 8' 2' (or 16' and 4' played an octave higher)	Bourdons 16' 8' 4' if not too loud

Option 2

Swell (left-hand)	Great (right-hand)	Choir	Pedal
String 8'	Same as Option 1	Soft 4' w/tremulant	Bourdons 16' 8' Choir to Pedal

Although neither of these solutions achieves the precisely desired timbre, compromises could be necessary on an instrument of fewer resources.

Variation 14

For the final variation, Dupré combines the two themes again—this time in a double fugue. This contrapuntal *tour de force* is also a virtuosic showpiece for both instruments, making a flamboyant ending to the piece. The piano emphasizes the uneven 5/4 meter with modified Theme B accents on the third beat. The organ takes Theme A and emphasizes the downbeat. The rhythmic structure makes this a challenge to coordinate between the performers. The final variation is a virtuosic finale in both its technical and compositional brilliance. Both themes make up a double fugue. In addition to the tension between the two fugues, there is a rhythmic tension with the uneven 5/4 meter. The piano accents the third beat while the organ emphasizes the downbeat. The two competing accents, the piano on the third beat and the organ on the downbeat create rhythmic tension. Use the accents as indicated to bring out this rhythmic tension.

In the fugal development (mm. 333–349), the instruments trade themes and treat them in canon within each instrument. The organ emphasizes the downbeats with both the sturdy presentation of Theme B, while the piano takes the motive of the second phrase of Theme A and puts the accents in the middle of the bar in the right-hand. During the end of the fugue (mm. 350–360), the 5/4-meter returns, and the instruments trade themes one last time. A codetta in 3/4 meter with crashing octaves in the piano and punctuated chords in the organ ends the piece.

Although the *Two Themes and Variations* do not present issues for analysis, there are challenges in performance and organ registration. As with many of Dupré's works for organ,

performing the work on smaller instruments will present registration issues that can be solved by adjusting the registration.

Chapter 5: Sinfonia, Op. 42

Dupré wrote the *Sinfonia* in 1946, dedicating it to Marguerite Dupré. The two premiered the work in 1946 at Eaton Auditorium in Toronto,[1] which had a large organ of four manuals and 91 stops representative of the North American orchestral organs of the early twentieth century built by the Casavant firm in 1931.[2] The *Sinfonia* is the final work that Dupré composed for the organ and piano. While written over a decade after the *Variations on Two Themes*, the work is still primarily pitch-centric, even with its chromatic language. The structure of the *Sinfonia* is the most intriguing aspect of this work. Thus, the majority of this chapter will discuss the structural issues.

5.1 Structural analysis

The *Sinfonia* represents an abridged form of the single-movement symphony/sonata. This form has a history of significant compositions, especially during the nineteenth century; these works include Franz Liszt's *Piano Sonata in B Minor* (1853), Arnold Schoenberg's *Chamber Symphony No. 1*, Op. 9 (1906), and César Franck's *Grande Pièce Symphonique*, Op. 17 (1860–1862). Additionally, Dupré explored this form in the *Evocation*, Op. 37 for organ and the *Symphonie en G mineur*, Op. 25 for orchestra and organ.

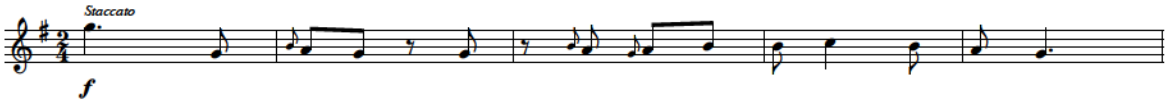
The length of the works above ranges from twenty to thirty minutes. Condensing a multi-movement work with multiple themes into eleven minutes makes this piece challenging to analyze, perform, and follow aurally, especially with the cyclical treatment of the themes.

[1] Rollin Smith, "The Organ and Choral Works of Marcel Dupré: An Annotated Listing," *The American Organist* (May 1986): 66.

[2] https://pipeorgandatabase.org/organ/53842

According to Delestre, one can easily see the forms of a symphony in the *Sinfonia*.[3] Pagett expands upon this idea by describing the *Sinfonia* as a work condensed into four subsections with cyclical themes.[4] Robert Delcamp compares it to the cyclic Liszt *Piano Sonata*.[5] While all of these analyses have merit, I agree with Delestre's view that the *Sinfonia* is a small-scale symphonic form, though I disagree that it is obvious to identify it as such. Therefore, the performers need to make themselves aware of the primary thematic material to aid in interpreting a compelling performance.

Overall, four themes make up the work. Theme 2, Theme 3, and a "transition" theme appear cyclically throughout the piece. The organ introduces Theme 1 with punctuated octaves in the home key of G major. Theme 1 also has distinctive grace notes embedded into the theme, which give the melody a sprightly quality. These grace notes help identify the theme during later reiterations.



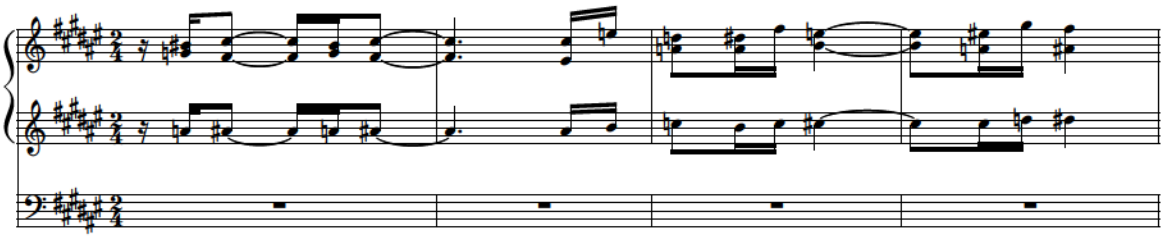
Example 5.1. *Sinfonia*, Theme 1, mm. 3–7.

After the full statement of Theme 1, the instruments trade roles with the piano taking Theme 1 in E major.

As mentioned above, one feature that makes this piece unusual is the transition theme, which serves as a recurring passage that binds each sub-section (or "movement") together. Its first appearance occurs between the first and second themes, and it is introduced using the 8'

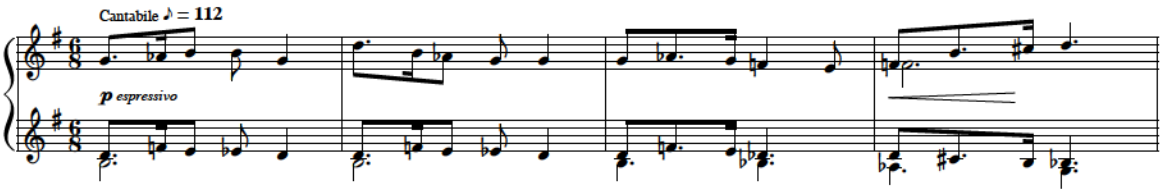
[3] Hill, "An English Translation," 102.
[4] Pagett, 462
[5] Robert Delcamp, liner notes to *Marcel Dupré: Works for Organ, Vol. 6*, Stefan Engels (organ) and Alessio Bax (piano), Naxos 8.554210, CD, 1999.

flute of the organ. The piano contains a toccata pattern while the organ takes the melody. Here, the syncopated motive, harmonized in three parts, is more chromatic using smaller intervals from a half step to a minor third. This motive is developed sequentially.



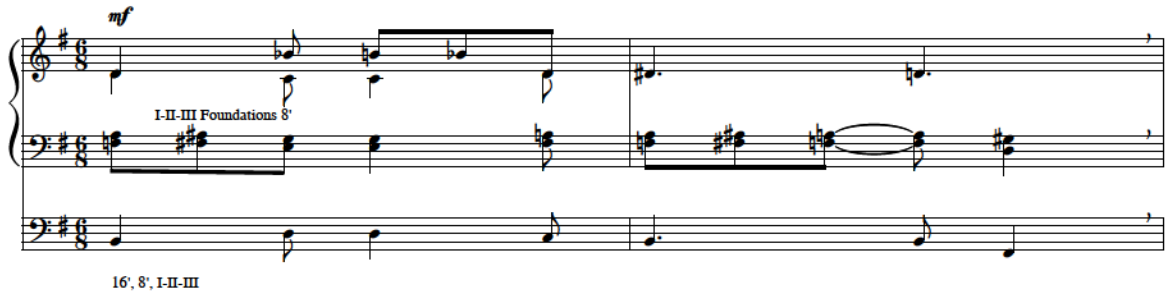
Example 5.2. *Sinfonia*, Transition Theme, mm. 30–33.

The piano introduces Theme 2 in a *sicilienne* style in 6/8. In contrast with Theme 1, the melody is more lyrical and features more stepwise motion. While stated in the home key of G, Theme 2 is more chromatic, using the octatonic scale. It consists of two parts with contrasting ideas. The first part is played on the *Hautbois* 8' accompanied by 8' and 4' flutes, while the piano part features off-beat octaves played softly and with grace notes that are similar to the grace notes of Theme 1.



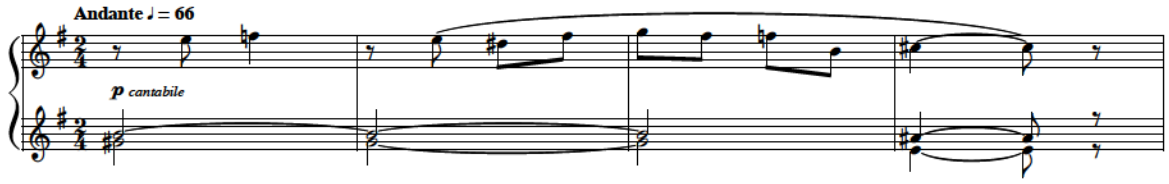
Example 5.3. *Sinfonia*, Theme 2, mm. 55–58.

The latter part of the Theme 2 is characterized by wide, disjunct leaps of ascending and descending sixths, offset by half-steps. This second part of Theme 2 becomes prominent as it appears cyclically in the third section.



Example 5.4. *Sinfonia*, the second half of Theme 2, mm. 64–65.

Theme 3 appears in the second section. As one of the cyclical themes, it also appears near the end of the work. Marked *cantabile*, the theme takes on a quasi-recitative style in the piano, which the organ later accompanies in ninth chords on the string stops. Like the previous themes, chromatic half-steps characterize this somber melody.



Example 5.5. *Sinfonia*, Theme 3, mm. 124–127.

Theme 4 is the defining theme in the fourth section of the *Sinfonia*. Delestre describes it as a tarantella.[6] Theme 4 only appears during this closing section, and it is representative of the ostinato themes of Dupré.[7]

[6] Delestre, 129.

[7] Several of Dupré's themes use ostinatos, especially at quick tempos. These pieces include *Poème Héroïque*, Op. 33, "Le Monde dans l'attente de Sauveur" from *Symphonie Passion*, Op. 23, and the *Prelude and Fugue in G Minor*, Op. 7.

Example 5.6. *Sinfonia*, Theme 4, mm. 283–290.

The figure below shows the form of the *Sinfonia*.

- Section 1: truncated sonata-allegro introduces Themes 1 and 2, and the Transition theme
    - Exposition
        - mm. 1–29: Theme 1
        - mm. 30–54: Transition theme
        - mm. 55–81: Theme 2 (in two parts)
    - Recapitulation

        - mm. 82–105
        - mm. 106–123: Transition theme returns
- Section 2: three-part "slow movement" introduces Theme 3
    - Part 1, mm. 124–165: Theme 3
    - Part 2, mm. 166–185: Variation on Theme 3
    - Part 3, mm. 186–210: Return of Theme 3 but highly modified
- Section 3: three-part "scherzo movement" based on Theme 2 of the first movement
    - Part 1, mm. 211–233: Introduction in piano and Theme 2 in organ
    - Part 2, mm. 234–244: Variation
    - Part 3, mm. 245–264: Return to *piu vivo*
- Transition, mm. 264–282: Return of Transition theme
- Section 4: free three-part form with Section 2 Theme returning
    - Part 1, mm. 283–342: Theme 4
    - Part 2, mm. 343–357: Return of Theme 3
    - Part 3, mm. 358: Return of Theme 4

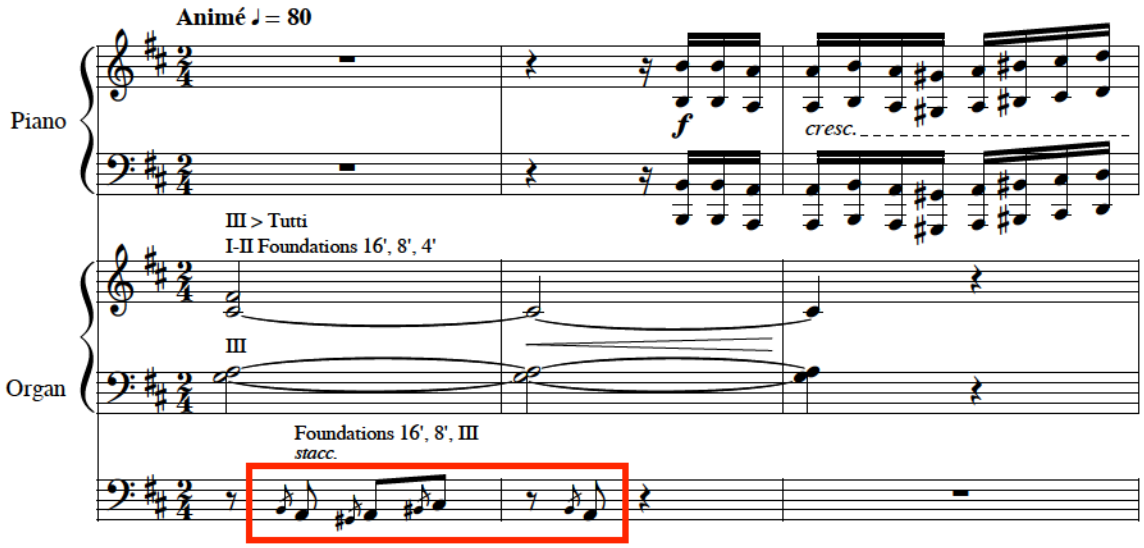
Figure 5.1. *Sinfonia* form.

Each of the four sections above corresponds to the movements of a four-movement sonata. The first section consists of three parts. Pagett identifies this section as a truncated sonata-allegro form, where the development is omitted between the exposition and a highly modified recapitulation.[8] A three-part "slow movement" makes up the second section with its lyrical theme. The third section functions as a scherzo movement based on Theme 2 of the first movement. Finally, the concluding section is a fast movement in the style of a tarantella. A transition theme recurs between the main sections.

The densely compact form of the *Sinfonia* makes the piece feel akin to a whirlwind upon the first listening. As in the *Ballade*, the themes undergo a constant transformation. In the context of this condensed symphony, grasping the themes proves to be difficult, especially when the themes appear only a few times. For example, the second appearance of Theme 1 occurs during

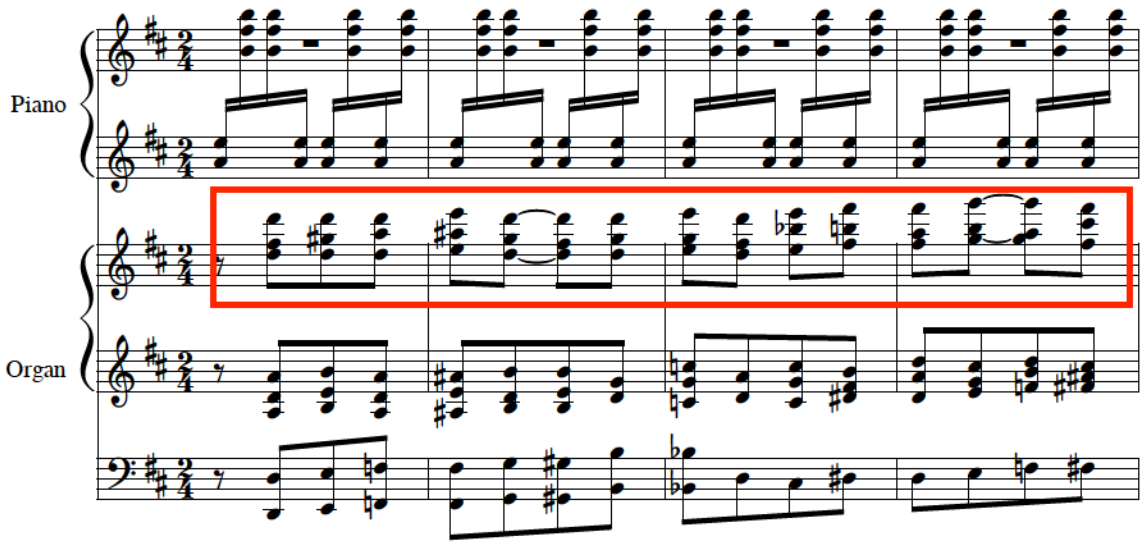
[8] Pagett, 463. This analysis of the first section as a truncated sonata-allegro form has merit. The use of two themes in the exposition and Theme 1 in the modified recapitulation support this interpretation. Additionally, many symphonic forms begin with a sonata-allegro movement. Even so, I think one could identify this section as an ABA form. Sonata-allegro form is not only dependent on themes but also key structure. The drama of the piece is developed through moving away from tonic and then eventually resolving it. In the case of *Sinfonia*, there is no return to the tonic.

the recapitulation highly modified and abbreviated from its first appearance. Without the expected developmental treatment that a theme usually receives in sonata-allegro form, the listener only gets a hint of the beginning melody.



Example 5.7. *Sinfonia*, mm. 81–83 showing modified Theme 1.

The grace notes and off-beat entrance in the Pedal provide the clue to Theme 1. The registration also harks back to the *tutti* at the opening of the piece. However, this reiteration of Theme 1 does not recur in the same form. After the piano buildup, which is built upon the major second intervals from the grace notes of Theme 1, the subsequent appearance of Theme 1 is modified again for one final appearance in the organ—this time harmonized and without the grace notes that make this theme distinctive.



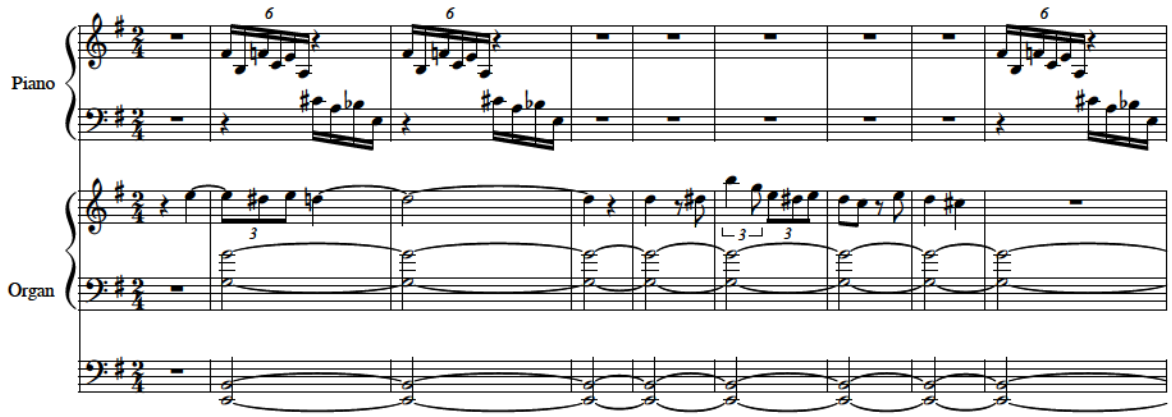
Example 5.8. *Sinfonia*, mm. 88–91 showing another modified Theme 1.

For the first section, there are three brief appearances of Theme 1 for the entire piece. Given the brevity of this truncated sonata-allegro section, the listener may not have enough time to comprehend the themes as easily, primarily as the sonata-allegro form often depends on some repetition and development of a theme. This aspect contributes to the breathless quality of the *Sinfonia*.

The most critical unifying structural element is Dupré's cyclical transition theme, which delineates the primary thematic sections. This use of a recurring theme is similar in function to the horn "motto" theme in Schoenberg's *Chamber Symphony No. 1*.[9] The transition theme does not recur between each of the sections. Instead, it separates Themes 1 and 2 during the first section, shifts the opening Sonata-allegro to the "slow movement," and finally serves as the transition from the "scherzo" into the final movement.

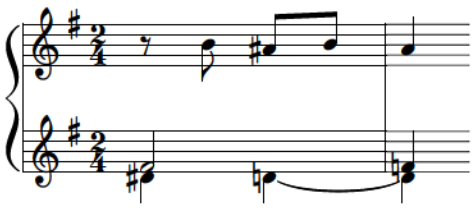
[9] The horn "motto" theme of ascending fourths recurs throughout the piece to indicate important structural points.

Functioning as the slow movement, the second section has three parts, all of which are based on Theme 3. The second part (mm. 166–185) forms a variation on Theme 3. Dupré creates a thick texture by adding a countermelody to Theme 3; the accompaniment consists of syncopated arpeggiation in the organ left-hand with double pedal and gentle figuration of triplet sixteenths in the piano. However, the thematic relation of the third part is not as obvious. Pagett calls this section a transition in two parts.[10] Here, the end of the second section (mm. 186–210) seems to have a new chromatic theme in the organ. It is developed as a dialogue between the organ and piano with the piano responding with interjections of minor seconds.



Example 5.9. *Sinfonia*, mm. 186—193.

However, upon closer inspection, the beginning chromatic motive is based on a fragment of Theme 3 (mm. 128–129).

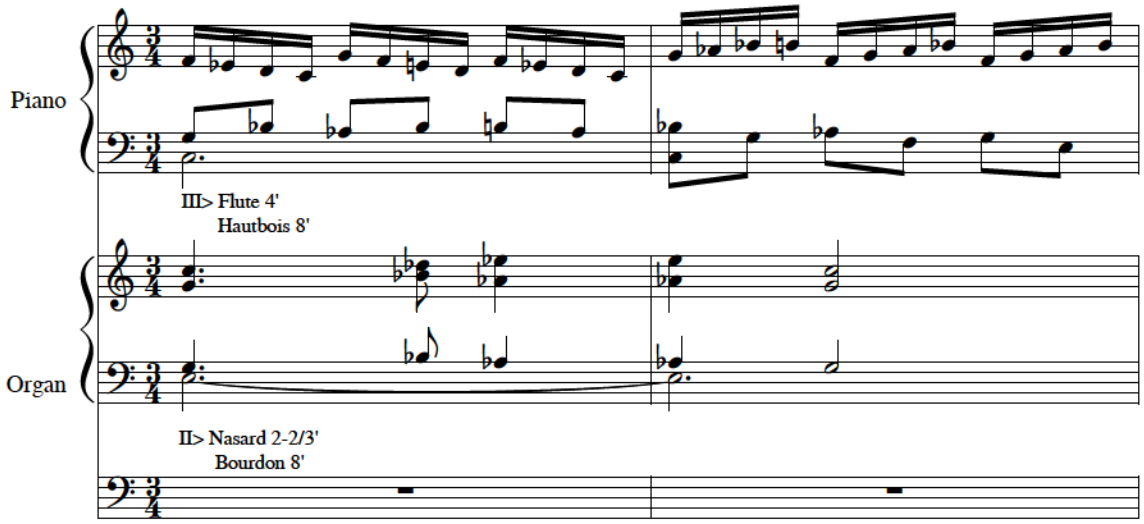


Example 5.10. *Sinfonia*, mm. 128–129 showing chromatic motive from Theme 3.

[10] Pagett, 467.

Both the return to the original Andante tempo and the appearance of Theme 3 make this an A'' section. Dupré merely offers hints of Theme 3, which only makes a full statement at the end of this section (mm. 204–210).

Consisting of three parts in ABA form, the third section (mm. 211–263) functions as the scherzo movement in the *Sinfonia* developing Theme 2. The opening begins with a bright, staccato accompaniment in 16ths in the piano while the organ reintroduces a modified Theme 2 from the first section.

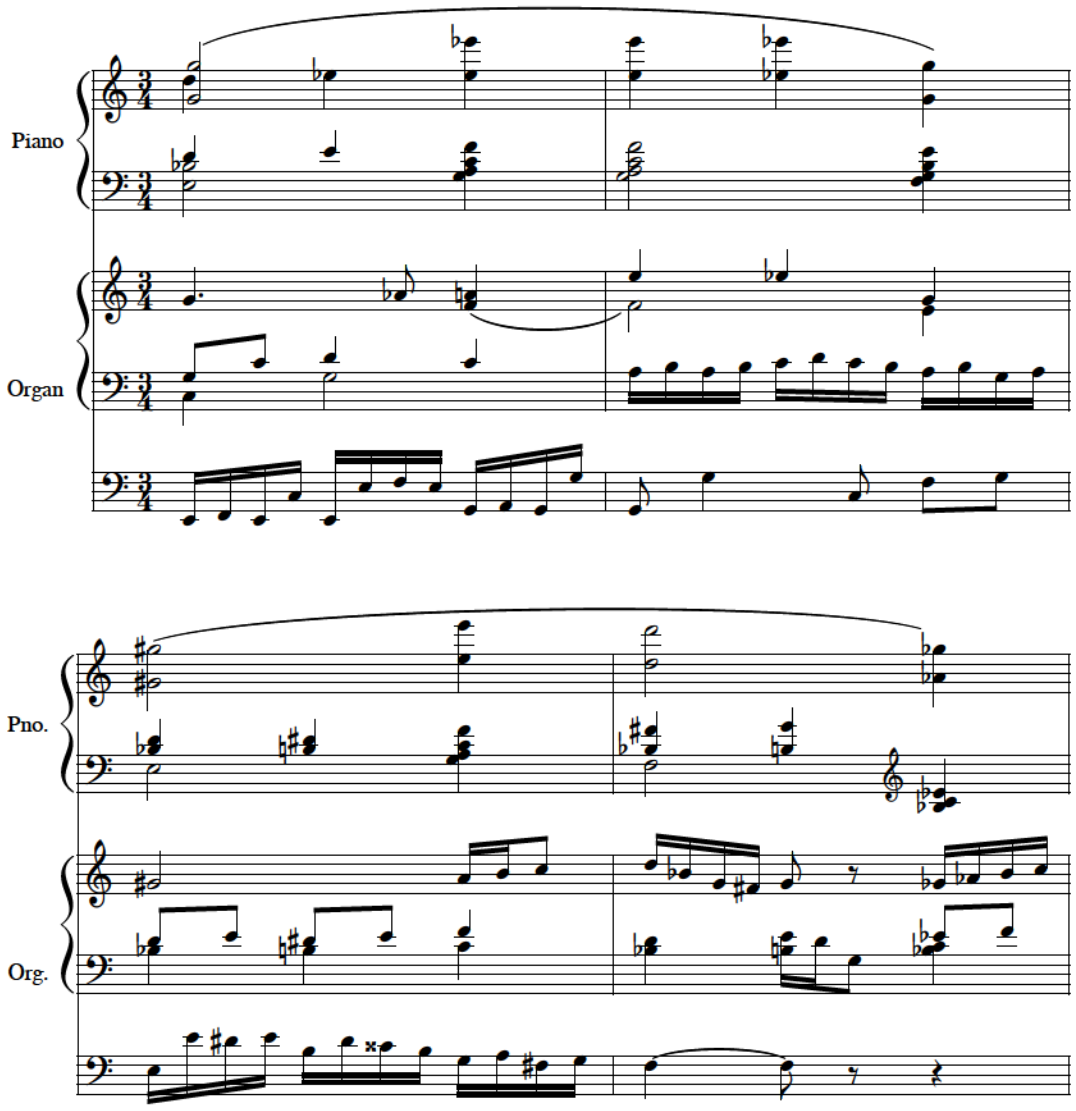


Example 5.11. *Sinfonia*, mm. 216–217 showing modified Theme 1.

Now set in simple triple meter, the sicilienne melody takes on a livelier quality. The alto and tenor voices double each other in octaves in this four-part texture. However, the contrasting registration in the organ part (*Hautbois* 8' and *Flûte* 4' in the right-hand alongside the *Bourdon* 8' and *Nasard* 2$^{2/3}$' in the left-hand) create a reedy timbre resulting from the combination of the quint overtone of the *Nasard* against the *Hautbois*. Dupré doubles the melody in the alto and

tenor voices in an orchestral manner to bring it to the foreground. This gapped registration represents another Neo-Classical combination in Dupré's works.

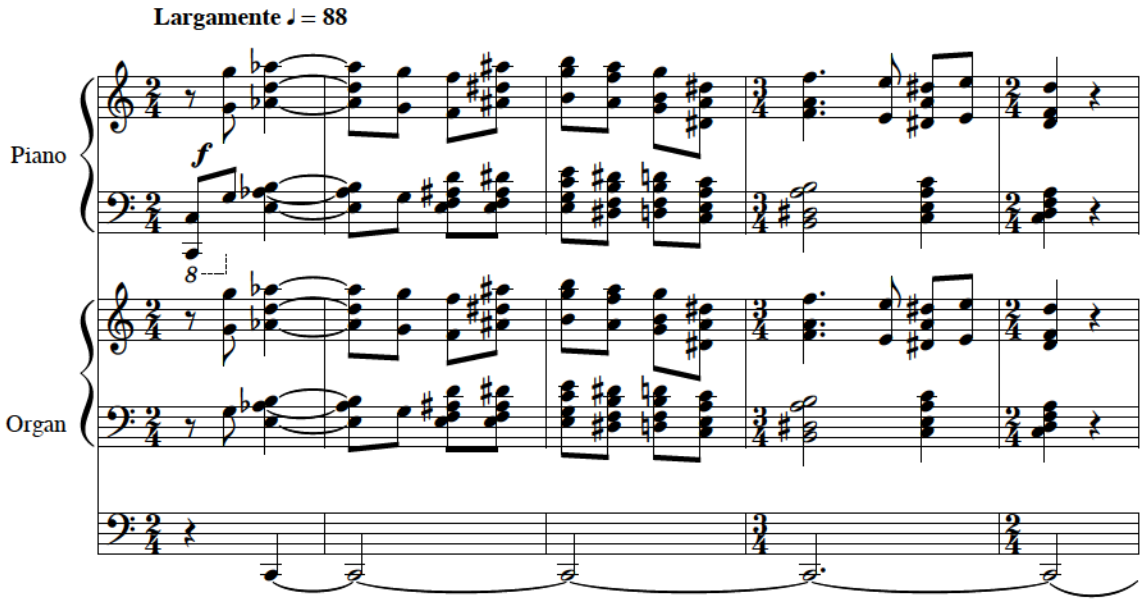
Marked *poco meno vivo*, the middle section develops the second half of Theme 2, which is stated on the piano. As a contrast to the outer sections, the effect is lyrical and melancholy reflecting the mood of the second half of Theme 2. The running sixteenths in the bass and the foundations of the manuals create a heavy texture under the melody.



Example 5.12. *Sinfonia*, mm. 234–237 showing modified Theme 2.

Making one final recurrence, the transition theme returns (mm. 264–274) before the concluding section to signal this important juncture between the sections. Although the toccata pattern of the piano appears highly altered from its initial presentation, the organ confirms this section as the transition theme at measure 269 with its recognizable syncopated sixteenth-note pickup motive. An extended buildup leading to the dominant of E♭ minor—the key of the fourth section—brings back the original piano toccata of the transition theme. Finally, the organ and piano punctuate ascending chromatic chords on the dominant in unison before the fourth section. The concluding fourth section is in three parts consisting of an exposition on Theme 4, a climax on Theme 3, and a coda. Theme 4 is set as a dialogue with alternating phrases between the piano and organ. Although starting in the distant key of E♭ minor, a transition (mm. 299–310) quickly modulates G major. Here, Theme 4 is heard in the tonic key—the first time a theme has been stated in the tonic key since the opening of the piece. A whole measure rest brings the tarantella to a complete stop before the middle section (mm. 343–357), where Theme 3 returns transformed.[11]

[11] The return of a lyrical theme completely transformed into a heroic one near the conclusion of a work is comparable to César Franck in "Pièce Héroïque" from *Trois Pièces pour Grand Orgue* (1878) and the end of the "Chorale No. 1" from *Trois Chorals pour Grand Orgue* (1890).



Example 5.13. *Sinfonia*, mm. 343–347, showing the last recurrence of Theme 3.

With the indicated tempo, *Largamente*, Dupré builds the music to the climactic point in the *Sinfonia*. The pedal points on C2 and D2 show the increasing tension on the subdominant to dominant, respectively. While the initial presentation of Theme 3 was quiet, melancholy, this last recurrence is forte with thick chords in both instruments. By setting Theme 3 at the climactic point of the piece, Dupré highlights the structural importance of this theme. The tarantella returns for the final coda (mm. 358).

Pagett states that the themes, especially the cyclical themes, lack characteristics that could make them more distinctive.[12] I believe his assessment is due to the chromatic nature of the themes, which can make them difficult to tell apart from each other.

Given the analytical and aural challenges associated with the thematic material, studying the harmonic language makes the structure clearer. Pedal tones underpin the shifting key centers

[12] Pagett, 470. Pagett also notes that the piece lacks a single climactic point, and that there are several "'dry' stretches."

and help define the many parts of the *Sinfonia*. Moreover, listeners will likely perceive the tension created by moving away from the tonic key and its delayed resolution. I believe this evasion of the original pitch center is one of the work's strengths and is what gives it shape. Straus states that "In post-tonal music, a sense of key or pitch-class center is often present only fleetingly."[13] In the case of the *Sinfonia*, Dupré briefly introduces the tonic key—G Major—and then immediately moves away from it for the majority of the piece.

After a brief opening in G major reinforced with the root position pedal tone, the quick introduction of the F2 in the pedal immediately gives the listener a sense of the instability that is to follow. The music shifts to E major for the second statement of Theme 1 (mm. 19), but the G♯ pedal tone reduces the strength of the E pitch center, which puts the E major center in the first inversion, contributing to the sense of tension and instability.

While the melody of Theme 2 outlines the G octatonic scale, the emphasis on the pitch class (pc) evades a sense of stability. In the accompaniment, B3 is the bass note. During the second part of Theme 2, the pedal tone emphasizes pc B as the center pitch under the chromatic theme (m. 64). Even when the beginning of Theme 2 returns, the pedal tone on B2 still pulls the center to pc B even though the melody is in G octatonic (mm. 73). Consequently, the pull away from a central pitch leaves the ending of Theme 2 unresolved. The emphasis on pc B merely hints at G as a pitch center. Dupré's use of pc B, being the third of G major, creates G major in the first inversion. This aspect mirrors the G♯ pedal tone in E major during the second statement of Theme 1 at the opening of the work (mm. 16–20). Thus, Dupré creates a link between these two themes through the emphasis on first inversion harmonies.

[13] Straus, 131.

The modified recapitulation begins ambiguously through its emphasis on an A major-minor seventh harmony with an added F♯. Although the key signature has hinted that the music is in D major (or B minor), the first confirmation of D major as the center pitch arrives later (m. 88). A series of crashing chords, often used by Dupré,[14] signals the end of this section. However, any sense of stability quickly breaks down yet again as the music modulates before ending abruptly in B major (m. 105) rather than ending on the tonic harmony. Since the original tonic harmony (G) does not return as one would expect in a recapitulation, the first section ends more openly. The relative brevity of this section and the lack of resolution leave the music unsettled. Keeping the movements harmonically open-ended is part of a strategic tradition of single-movement sonata forms.[15]

As for the remainder of *Sinfonia*, the reader can find the key areas by using the techniques for pitch-centric music explained previously. The analysis includes an examination of the emphasized pitches including sustained pitches and repeated pitches, the types of scales and chords utilized, and key signatures. While certainly not an exhaustive list for analysis, the performer will have a basic understanding of how pitch centricity plays a role in Dupré's works.

5.2 Performance Issues

As in the previous pieces, the organist should shorten the ends of phrases for clarity, especially in rooms with reverberant acoustics. For example, at the end of the first phrase (m. 7), change the dotted quarter G in the manuals to a quarter note followed by an eighth rest; release

[14] These crashing chords can be found at the end of several of Dupré's pieces including, "Carillon" from *Sept Pièces*, Op. 27, No. 4, "*Le monde dans l'attende du Sauveur*" and "*Résurrection*" from *Symphonie-Passion*, Op. 23, the last movement of *Psaume 18 pour orgue*, Op. 47, and several other pieces. Additionally, Dupré used this ending formula at the close of his improvisations, as can be heard in his improvisation on "Veni Creator, Spiritus." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOnr5uhoPlE

[15] These pieces include Franz Liszt's *Piano Sonata in B Minor*, S. 187, and Arnold Schoenberg's *Chamber Symphony No. 1 in E Major*, Op. 9.

the pedal G simultaneously by modifying the half note to a dotted quarter followed by an eighth rest. The release will allow the introduction of the F2 in the pedal (which creates a dominant-seventh harmony in the third inversion) to be heard clearly against the previous tonic harmony. Release the pedal early for the end of the second phrase (m. 14) to highlight both the transfer of the melody to the piano and the tonal shift to E major.

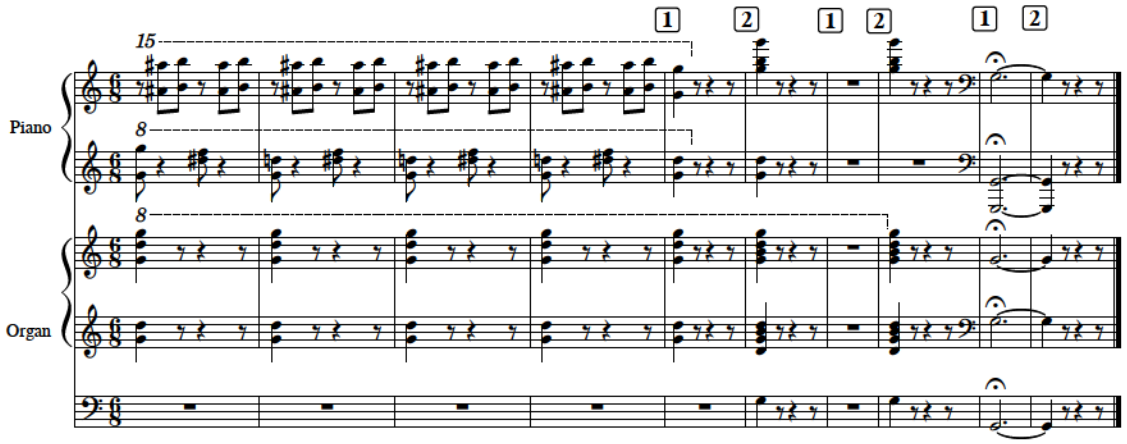
The rhythmic complexity between the organ and piano in the transition section makes it a difficult passage to coordinate. The toccata figuration in the piano will require judicious use of the sustain pedal to bring out the juxtaposition of the F♯ major and minor chords. Additionally, the pianist could slightly accent the repeated chord on the downbeat of each measure to help the organist find the downbeat in this syncopated passage. The organist should lift after any notes of dotted quarter length (m. 33, 35, mm. 34–35, 37, 38–39) at the ends of the phrases mentioned above. Additionally, the organist could break after the eighths in the *figura corta* figuration for clarity, especially in reverberant rooms. During the final appearance of the transition theme, Dupré specifically indicates the articulation in the organ (mm. 269–274f) with sixteenth rests and *staccatissimo* marks. The performer could match these indications in this section's first appearance as well for clarity. However, this latter version could represent an articulative transformation of the transition theme, supported by the different pianistic figuration. Dupré does not mark such articulation in the first two appearances of the transition theme. The organist can weigh these considerations to help coordination.

With its recitative-like passages in the opening (mm. 124–165) and closing of the second section (mm. 166–185), the performers should feel to play with a sense of freedom, especially since the setting of melodic and accompaniment roles makes it easy to do so. Here, the instruments are treated in three ways: one instrument playing alone; one instrument is the melody

and the other accompanies; one instrument sustains chords while the other provides figuration. By allowing one instrument to play freely while the other instrument has sustained pitches, the performers can use rubato.

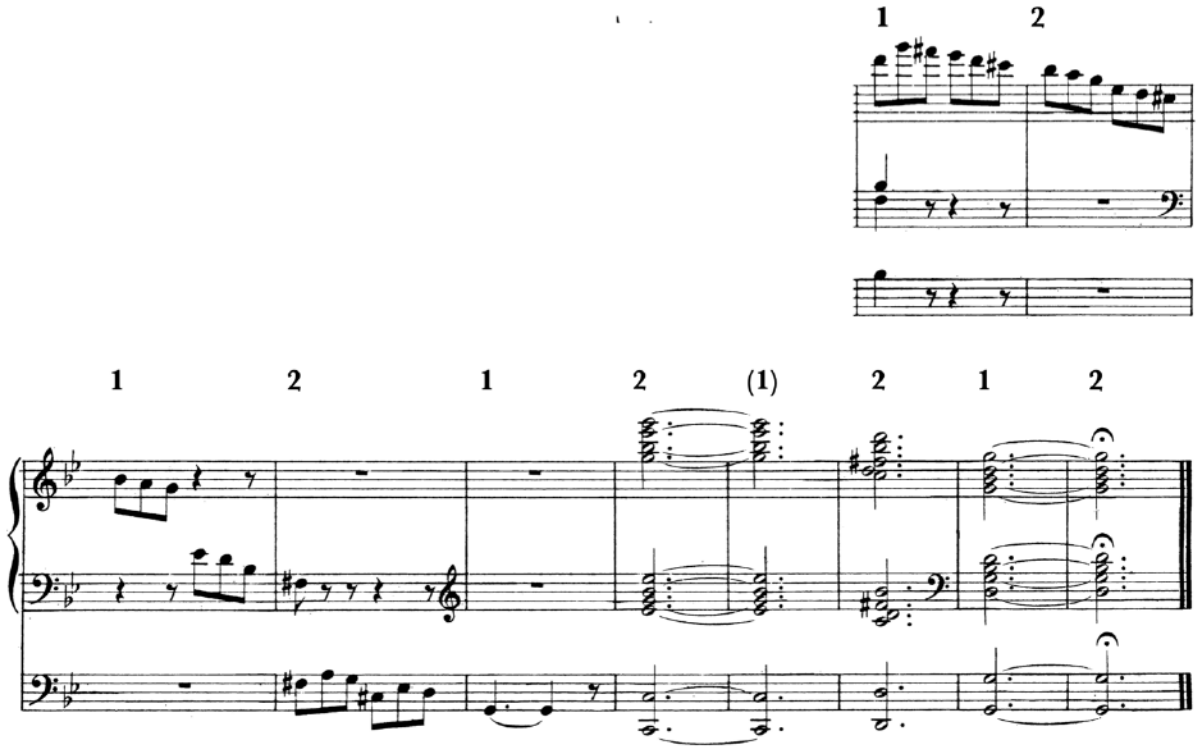
Resembling an ABA scherzo form, the "third" movement of the work (mm. 211–263) develops Theme 2. The lively outer sections develop the beginning of Theme 2 while the slower middle develops the second half of Theme 2. Adopt a detached articulation for the brighter character of this movement and to match the non-legato articulation in the piano part. As discussed in previous chapters, the organist could detach between the dotted quarter and eighth notes for clarity. Additionally, since the organist and pianist must begin the B section (mm. 234–242) together immediately after the tempo transition, the pianist should use the *ritenuto* indicated in the preceding measure to help set the new tempo; the sixteenths will help provide the necessary subdivision to make the new tempo clear for the organist.

For the closing bars of the fourth section (mm. 396), I suggest keeping the pulse steady to the final note. The closing tonic chords establish a rhythmic syncopation and slowing down would negate this rhythmic tension. The example below indicates the alternating strong and weak measures (labeled 1 and 2, respectively).



Example 5.14. *Sinfonia*, mm. 396–405 showing hypermeter.

Dupré could have very written the last note one measure later. However, one would lose the premature arrival of the final note. This effect shifts the accent of the hypermeasure. For performers, taking a ritardando would weaken this effect. The ending of Dupré's Prelude and Fugue in G Minor, Op. 7 features a shifting hypermetric accent.



Example 5.15. ***Fugue in G Minor, Op. 7.***

Here, the arrival of the C minor seventh chord during the last four bars creates an accented syncopation. I believe a slowing of tempo, especially when one is not indicated in Dupré's music, spoils the hypermetric syncopation. Therefore, keep the pulse consistent to keep the rhythmic tension through the last chord.

5.3 Registration

As with the earlier works, Dupré leaves the exact manual indications for the solo registrations open so that the performer may choose where to select these stops. The opening of

the work indicates "Foundations 16 and 8" in the Pedal with "III Tutti <,[16] I-II Foundations 16', 8', 4' in the manuals." Following this registration creates a balance issue between the manuals and pedals, as the powerful reeds in the tutti of the manuals will overtake the pedal foundations. I believe this is an error corrected in the development or recapitulation section (m. 81ff) with the registration "Foundations 16', 8', III" indicating to couple the Swell reeds to the Pedal. Therefore, the organist should apply the Swell to Pedal coupler at the opening of the work.

The registration of the "second movement" *poco più mosso* (mm. 166–185) is curious. The left-hand Principal 8' on Manual II is to be coupled to the Flute 8' of the Pedal; given the sustained double pedal pitches, a voicing issue is created with the syncopated left-hand pitches because coupling II to the Pedal will cause the left-hand notes not to play (for example the redundant B3 pitches in mm. 167–168). The organist might disregard the coupling indication to avoid the creation of voice-leading issues.[17] Additionally, a timbre and balance problem may occur from this registration. The French *Flûte* is a wide-scaled stop[18] not commonly found on smaller instruments, which means that the more common Bourdon 8' (being a softer, closed stop) or Principal 8' (being a louder narrower scaled stop) will not create the intended timbre or balance with the manuals. On many organs, coupling the Principal 8' from the manual into the pedal could cause the pedal to overbalance the softer strings in the manuals, especially if the Swell strings are not as keen and loud as the French *Voix céleste*. If a suitable open flute is not available in the pedal (or through coupling an open flute from another manual), the organist will need to decide how to balance the pedals with the manuals.[19]

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[16] The symbol "<" indicates for the performer to open the Swell shades.

[17] It is quite possible that this indication is an error. Dupré could have meant "III/P" instead of "II/P." Coupling the accompaniment combination to the pedal would make more sense and would not create voice-leading issues.

[18] Goodrich, 55.

[19] As sustained pedal tones tend to sound louder than the upper manual parts, the best solution might be to use a Bourdon 8' even if it is too soft.

Overall, the *Sinfonia* presents a noteworthy experiment of the single-movement sonata/symphony form even though the work's extreme brevity makes it difficult to digest. As always, Dupré makes use of the piano and organ effectively and The *Sinfonia* deserves multiple performances. Because of the experimental nature of its construction, understanding the shape of the piece, such as the role that harmonic tension/avoidance of the original pitch center plays in the creation of musical tension, is critical to effective performance. That being said, it is never possible to get every detail on one hearing of any work as there will be many interesting details that performers cannot "disassemble" or the audience. Nevertheless, as in any performance, a variety of interpretations can be crafted that will highlight different aspects of this fascinating piece.

Chapter 6: Results, Additional Issues, and Conclusion

This study addresses the challenges of Dupré's organ and piano duets. Moreover, it deals with the task of putting the organ and piano together. I left fingering and pedaling out of this discussion, as no single solution will work for every performer. Additionally, fingering and pedaling can change depending on the instrument and the acoustics.

From this study, we can see that the ideal organ would be a large instrument suited to the Romantic repertoire with multiple expressive divisions, pistons, and imitative orchestral stops. Although the performance is possible on two manuals and pedals, three manuals are preferable, especially in the sections with orchestral stops in dialogue discussed in the previous chapters.[1]

The balance between the organ and piano

As discussed above, the softer stops of the organ will struggle to be heard over the piano. Opening the swell box or having the pianist play more quietly should help. On the other hand, the full organ on larger instruments will overwhelm the piano. Dupré solves this issue in the *Sinfonia*, which contains an indicated ensemble registration on three manuals at a *forte* dynamic:

III: Tutti (open swell box)
I-II: Foundations 16' 8' 4' (couple III/II/I and III/II)
Pedal: Foundations 16' 8' (couple III/I)

The registration allows for the color of the *anches* (provided by the *Récit*) to be heard in the full ensemble, which is boosted by foundation stops on the other manuals. Simultaneously, the organ *anches* of the *Positif*, *Grand-Orgue*, and *Pédale* are eschewed so that the organ does not overpower the piano. One could assume that the organist could add a few carefully chosen stops

[1] In the few instances Dupré does indicate manuals, as in the *Sinfonia*, he usually indicates three manuals.

in the *fortissimo* registrations to increase the dynamic of the organ while still balancing with the piano.

Tempo

Try the indicated tempo and adjust for acoustics and instruments. As for all compositions supplied with tempo indications, take the indications with some relativity. In the case of Dupré's works, the indicated tempos tend to veer on the fast side, which makes some passages too fast to execute and others lose their lyrical quality. Audio recordings show that although Dupré's performance tempos tended to be lively, he often played slightly slower than his indications in the score.[2] Different organs will require different tempos, and the organist needs to listen to the instrument to help determine the tempo. Related to the issue of tempo and instrument is the question of acoustics. Take care not to rush the tempos in more resonant buildings. Because of the reasons outlined above, I suggest taking most of the indicated tempos a touch more slowly so that at the very least the pipes are allowed to speak[3] and to offer a more musically satisfying result.

Additionally, it might help to practice the slower sections at faster tempos. This practice can the performers feel the musical direction and climaxes of each phrase or group of phrases. After practicing at the faster tempo, return to the original performance tempo and try to achieve the same musical result.

[2] On his recording of the *Prelude and Fugue in G Minor*, Op. 7, Dupré takes a tempo that is close to the indicated dotted quarter = 112 BPM; most organists take an even slower tempo. The Fugue is taken at c. 106–110 compared to the indicated tempo of 126. Marcel Dupré, *Prelude and Fugue in G Minor, Op. 7 No. 3*, performed by Marcel Dupré, Mercury 478 8983, 2015, CD. Dupré's recording of the Carillon, Op. 27, No. 4 takes a tempo of c. 70 = half note while the indication is 80. Marcel Dupré, *Carillon, from Sept Pièces*, performed by Marcel Dupré, Mercury 478 8388, 2015, CD.

[3] This is especially the case with reed stops and 16' stops, which take a longer period of time to speak.

When possible, the performers could make use of a metronome when practicing together to ensure correct and consistent tempos. Some digital metronomes available on smartphones allow for preset tempos, which is useful when rehearsing tempo changes.

Instrumental placement and acoustics

The ideal setup has the organ and piano placed on the same level so the instruments will have the highest chance of speaking together.[4] The music room at Dupré's house in Meudon, boasting a substantial pipe organ and grand piano, would have been an ideal performance venue, as the performers would have been near one other.[5] However, ideal conditions are not always possible. For example, the organ pipes are often elevated above the console, resulting in a delay between the pressing of the key and the sound of the pipes. In such instances, the organist may need to play "ahead of the beat" to sound on the beat. Visually, the piano and the console (if moveable) need to be placed so that the musicians can communicate with each other via eye contact and/or cueing with the body. The height of some organ consoles, especially on larger organs, will make this difficult. Solutions for difficult sight include the use of mirrors or a video feed.

When the organ and piano are not located on the same level, the challenge to coordinate the two instruments will be more arduous. Similarly, both the organ and console are often located on a balcony of a church or concert hall, while the piano might be located on a lower level of the stage. If putting the two instruments on the same level within the same vicinity is not possible, there are some possibilities to overcome this. In this situation, the organist will have to

[4] Remember to ensure that the organ and piano match both pitch level and temperament! Most pianos will be tuned in equal temperament. However, some organs may use a different temperament.

[5] Rollin Smith, *Pipe Organs of the Rich and Famous,* ed. Len Levasseur (Richmond: OHS Press, 2014), 94–95.

keep his/her steady pulse while not listening to the pianist—otherwise, the organ will sound late to both the pianist and the listener. In my experience preparing for this project, I found that I had to play ahead of the beat at all times when the instruments were so divided, which requires concentration and practice. One solution would be to use a mic to amplify the piano and have the organist use an in-ear headphone to hear the attack of the piano more clearly rather than the delayed sound coming from the room. The organist will need to take responsibility for maintaining the pulse because the organ is often located behind the piano.

Rehearsal Techniques

Instances of the organ in chamber music are rare, and organists may not be accustomed to working in the manner of a chamber musician. Thus, I will include some practice techniques from chamber music to aid in the rehearsal process. First, rehearsals will be much more efficient if each player learns the other part so that the rehearsal together will not be a completely new experience when the two parts are combined. When rehearsing together, it is helpful to practice at slower tempos as one would when practicing solo repertoire. Doing so will help the performers adjust to each other as they begin to hear the sound of the other player. Also, I found it most helpful to practice with stops that were softer than the indicated registrations in the fuller sections to help me hear the pianist more clearly.

In many cases, the use of physical conducting gestures with the head, shoulders, eyes, and the occasional free hand will aid ensemble communication. If the organist has experience conducting a choir from the console, use these gestures to help cue the pianist with entrances and

tempo changes.[6] Practice and refine all conducting gestures into the "choreography" of stop changes and pistons.

Finally, not all pianists understand how the organ makes sound and how this affects musical interpretation. Provide a brief tutorial on organ construction, how the organ creates sound, and how the console functions to help the organist make music. Pianists might need to know about the time it takes to push pistons and change manuals. Musically, they need to be aware of how organists create dynamics through touch and manipulation of the subdivision. Discuss the factors organists face that affect tempo choices such as slow speaking reed or string stops. Having these discussions with the pianist will save time and prevent unnecessary frustration in rehearsals.

Conclusion

This study aims to equip performers with a deeper understanding of Marcel Dupré's organ and piano works—a part of his oeuvre that receives less attention than several of his organ works. Several explanations exist as to why these works have rare performances. First, these virtuosic concert pieces require both the organist and the pianist to possess an advanced technique and musicianship to perform. Also, finding a venue with an organ and piano that can manage these pieces proves is a challenge. Dupré's varied registrations require the resources of a large organ.[7] As discussed above, the complexity of these pieces makes ensemble coordination a challenge. Further complicating matters is that many room arrangements do not allow for easy

[6] Organists who do not have experience conducting should seek the assistance of a reliable choral director or organist with console conducting experience.

[7] Although it is possible to perform these pieces on a two-manual organ, my experience demonstrated that performance on a three manual organ was much more feasible due to the rapid changes in registration.

sightlines between the organist and pianist. This study investigates some ideas on how to coordinate the two instruments into a cohesive and musically satisfying ensemble.

While this study addresses some of the formal structures and harmonic language of Dupré's compositions, it is far from being a complete analytical study of the composer's works. Formal analyses of twentieth-century French organ music are still rare and the topic warrants further exploration. Part of the issue here is that composers explored a wide variety of techniques during the twentieth century. Nonetheless, the analysis provided serves as a springboard to further analysis. It is through analysis that performers can arrive at an informed and compelling interpretation of these works.

Appendix A: Organ Specifications

Marcel Dupré's Residence Organ, Meudon: Originally built by Mutin Cavaillé-Coll in 1899
Enlarged with electric action in 1933–1934

I. Grand-Orgue	**II. Positif expressif**	**III. Récit expressif**	**IV. Solo expressif**	**Pédale**
Bourdon 16' Montre 8' Salicional 8' Flûte harmonique 8' Prestant 4'	Quintaton 16' Principal 8' Cor de nuit 8' Flûte douce 4' Nasard 2-2/3' Quarte de nasard 2' Tierce 1-3/5' Clarinette 8'	Diapason 8' Flûte traversière 8' Dulciane 8' Voix céleste 8' Flûte octaviante 4' Doublette 2' Plein Jeu III Trompette harmonique 8' Basson-Hautbois 8'	Gambe 8' Voix céleste 8' Flûte 4' Basson 16' Clarinette 8' Hautbois 8'	Contrebasse 16' Soubasse 16' Flûte 8' Bourdon 8' Violoncelle 8' Basson 16'
Sostenuto	Sostenuto Trémolo	Sostenuto Trémolo	Sostenuto Trémolo	Coupure pédale (Pedale divide)

Chancel organ, Grace Episcopal Cathedral: Built by the Ernest M. Skinner Company, Op. 201
Specifications from 1912
Premiere for the *Variations on two Themes*

Great (II)	**Swell (III)**	**Choir (I)**	**Solo (IV)**	**Pedal**
Diapason 16' Bourdon 16' (Ped) First Diapason 8' Second Diapason 8' Third Diapason 8' Double Flute 8' Philomela 8' (Ped) Waldflote 8' Gedeckt 8' Dulciana 8' Erzahler 8' Octave 4' Flute 4' Twelfth 2-2/3' Fifteenth 2' Harmonics V Mixture V Trumpet 16' Trumpet 8' Clarion 4'	Bourdon 16' Dulciana 16' First Diapason 8' Second Diapason 8' Clarabella 8' Salicional 8' Voix Celeste 8' Gedeckt 8' Spitzflote 8' Flute Celeste 8' Aeoline 8' Unda Maris 8' Octave 4' Flute 4' Violin 4' Violin Celeste 4' Flautino 2' Dolce Cornet III Mixture III Posaune 16' English Horn 16' Posaune 8' French Trumpet 8' Flugel Horn 8' Oboe 8'	Gamba 16' Diapason 8' Geigen Principal 8' Gamba 8' Gamba Celeste 8' Concert Flute 8' Quintadena 8' Dulcet II 8' Flute 4' Piccolo 2' Fagotto 16' Clarinet 8' Orchestral Oboe 8' Vox Humana 8' Harp Celesta	Philomela 8' Gamba 8' Gamba Celeste 8' Orchestral Flute 8' Orchestral Flute 4' Trombone 16' Fagotto 16' (Ch) Tuba Mirabilis 8' Tuba 8' French Horn 8' Clarinet 8' (Ch) Orchestral Oboe 8' (Ch) Clarion 4' Tremolo **Echo** Quintadena 8' Vox Humana 8' Tremolo	Gamba 32' Bourdon 32' First Diapason 16' Second Diapason 16' Third Diapason 16' Bourdon 16' Soft Bourdon (Sw) Gamba 16' Dulciana 16' First Octave 8' Second Octave 8' Third Octave 8' Gedeckt 8' Soft Gedeckt 8' Gamba 8' Cello (Ch) Super Octave 4' Flute 4' Bombarde 32' Trombone 16' Second Trombone 16' (So) Posaune 16' (Sw)

	Vox Humana 8' Clarion 4'			English Horn 16' (Sw) Fagotto 16' (Ch) Quint Trombone 10-2/3' (So) Trumpet 8' Second Trumpet 8' (So) Horn 8' (Sw) Clarion 4' Second Clarion 4' (So)
	Tremolo	Tremolo		

Eaton Auditorium, Toronto, Ontario: Built by Casavant, Op. 1414 in 1931
Premiere for the *Sinfonia*.
Organ relocated
Condition unknown

Great	**Choir**	**Swell**	**Solo I**	**Pedal**
Double Open Diapason 16' Bourdon 16' Open Diapason I 8' Open Diapason II 8' Violin Diapason 8' Hohlflöte 8' Rohrflöte 8' Gemshorn 8' Octave 4' Harmonic Flute 4' Principal 4 Twelfth 2-2/3' Fifteenth 2' Mixture III Mixture V Double Trumpet 16' Trumpet 8' Clarion 4' Chimes (Ch) Celesta (Ch) Snare Drum (Sw)	Contra Dulciana 16' Open Diapason 8' Melodia 8' Gamba 8' Dulciana 8' Unda Maris 8' Lieblich Flute 4' Violina 4' Nasard 2-2/3' Flageolet 2' Tierce 1-3/5' Contra Fagotto 16' Trumpet 8' Clarinet 8' Clarion 4' Chimes Celesta 16' Celesta Castanets Xylophone	Bourdon 16' Open Diapason 8' Stopped Diapason 8' Salicional 8' Viola da Gamba 8' Voix Celeste 8' Aeoline 8' Principal 4' Flauto Traverso 4' Piccolo 2' Cornet V Mixture III Double Trumpet 16' Cornopean 8' Oboe 8' Vox Humana 8' Clarion 4' Chimes (Ch) Celesta (Ch) Xylophone (So) Snare Drum	Contra Gamba 16' Viole d'Orchestre 8' Viole Celeste 8' Concert Flute 8' Octave Viole 4' Cornet des Violes III French Horn 8' Cor Anglais 8' Orchestral Oboe 8' Musette 8' Xylophone Chimes (Ch) Celesta (Ch) **Solo II** Stentorphone 8' Gross Flute 8' Tuba Magna 16' Tuba Mirabilis 8' Tuba Clarion 4'	Double Open 32' Open Diapason 16' Open Diapason 16' (Gt) Bourdon 16' Violine 16' Gamba 16' Gedeckt 16' (Sw) Dulciana 16' (Ch) Octave 8' Stopped Flute 8' Violoncello 8' Flute 4' Mixture IV Contra Bombarde 32' Bombarde 16' Trombone 16' (So) Fagotto 16' (Ch) Trumpet 8' Clarion 4' Chimes (Ch) Bass Drum (in Sw)
Super coupler	Tremulant Sub coupler Unison Off Super Coupler	Tremulant Sub Unison off Super	Tremulant Sub Super	

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